Pharmacy Leadership and Management Module: An evaluation of the student experience and its perceived usefulness for future employment

Matthew J Boyd, Vibhu Solanki, Kimberley Sonnex, Sarah Brydges, Claire Anderson. Division of Pharmacy Practice and Policy, University of Nottingham, UK

Background
Pharmacy Leadership and Management is a 12-day, final-year synoptic experiential learning simulation bringing together leadership and management with clinical problem solving. Student teams of 6 run a primary care-based pharmacy business and are presented with approximately 180 scenarios and over 400 medicines-based exercises during the course of the simulation. In addition students are also provided with longer term development projects such as health promotion campaigns. Students also receive a wide range of more practice focussed training including, human resource management, recruitment, business theory, service development and commissioning. This module is based on the successful model created by the GIMMICS consortia of universities (www.gimmics.nl). The aim of this work was to evaluate the acceptability and perceived usefulness of the module to students and their future employment.

Method
An online 82-item questionnaire was sent to all 221 students on the module comprising open and closed questions about their module experiences. Analysis consisted of frequency counts and percentages.

Results
Sixty-five percent of students completed the survey (n=143), 27% (n=39) were male, 43%(n=62) were home/EU students 35% (n=53) of students reported having had one week or less of pharmacy experience outside that provided during the course.

83% (n=119) of students reported that they enjoyed the module, with 92% reporting that the module challenged them (n=132). 89% said it made them more confident talking to patients (n=127). Team work and coaching was an important aspect of the module design. 84% reported that their team-working skills improved as the module progressed (n=110/131), 81% of students reported coaching a team member to improve during the module (n=106/131), but 60% also expressed a desire for more guidance on how to coach others effectively (n=79/132). 89% of students stated that they thought the module consolidated their learning across the degree (n=117/131). Despite the nature of the module, over half felt that the business skills would not be useful to their future career (55%, n=71/131). Nearly two-thirds of students thought the module would make them more employable as a direct result of the module (65%, n=84/130), citing reasons such as increased confidence and “made me more dynamic in terms of dealing with situations in a high pressure environment”

Conclusion
This new module has assisted students to develop themselves by challenging them and assisting to consolidate their team-working skills. Despite the importance of understanding business and management, students still appear to lack appreciation of this topic, perhaps due to lack of practice exposure in the course. We will be following up with these graduates to evaluate the module impact on the next stages of their career.