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2015

# Patient-directed clinical skills: valued by students

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## Publication Details

Weston, K., McCarthy, L., Simpson, H., Vella, S., Rienits, H. & Hudson, J. (2015). Patient-directed clinical skills: valued by students. Abstract of the ANZAHPE/AMEA 2015 Conference (pp. 1-1). Australia: Australian and New Zealand Association for Health Professional Educators and Asian Medical Education Association.

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## Patient-directed clinical skills: valued by students

### **Abstract**

Abstract of an oral presentation at the ANZAHPE/AMEA 2015 Conference, 29-31 March, Newcastle, Australia.

### **Disciplines**

Medicine and Health Sciences | Social and Behavioral Sciences

### **Publication Details**

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## **Patient-directed Clinical Skills: Valued By Students**

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### **Introduction/ Background**

Teaching medical students how to perform sensitive or intimate clinical examinations can be challenging. Students can feel embarrassed, daunted or nervous about performing intimate procedures on a person, as compared to practising on a mannequin. Opportunities for medical students to have an authentic experience of intimate examination prior to a clinical placement may help improve confidence and capability in this area and better prepare students for learning experiences in clinical settings. At this Australian medical school, motivated community members are engaged as 'teaching associates' for various procedures including female and male intimate examinations, and to provide feedback to the students. Teaching associates work with clinicians to prepare for their role in guiding students through the process of conducting competent patient-centred intimate examinations.

### **Purpose/Objectives**

To evaluate the development of medical students' skills and confidence in undertaking gynaecological examinations on real-life female (simulated) patients, and to identify the students' perception of the contribution made by the teaching associates employed in this role to their learning.

### **Method or Issues for exploration/ideas for discussion**

Medical students were asked to complete an evaluation after the clinical skills session during which they individually undertook to perform a gynaecological examination with a woman teaching associate. The evaluation asked students to rank their level of satisfaction with the session, with the contribution of the teaching associate to the students' learning, and to what degree the students felt involving a real person in their clinical learning helped consolidate their skills and confidence. Students were also able to provide additional comments and feedback.

### **Results**

Students' evaluations clearly demonstrated that the skills session with the teaching associates consolidated their skills and confidence in performing a gynaecological examination. Importantly, the students felt that the teaching associates contributed to their learning about performing intimate examinations and provided valuable feedback about their abilities and areas for improvement. Qualitative analysis of free-text comments confirmed that the students valued the contribution made by the teaching associate.

### **Conclusion**

Students value the opportunity to learn intimate examinations from individual simulated patients (teaching associates) in the University setting, prior to conducting these examinations during clinical placements. Evaluations revealed that the guidance and feedback that the teaching associates contributed was a highly valued and important part of student learning. Offering students an authentic opportunity to learn a sometimes challenging skill in the protected environment of the medical school skills centre, can help them prepare for the real world of clinical practice. Community members, such as the teaching associates, can play a valuable role in directing and guiding students to achieve confidence and

competence as medical practitioners.