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FROM AD HOC TEACHING SESSIONS TO FULL-DAY THEMED TEACHING DAYS: AN UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION TEAM'S RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Background: The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the education of medical students. Many final-year students felt overwhelmed by the pandemic and less confident in the clinical setting having missed a significant proportion of their fourth-year studies. In addition, with increased numbers of critically unwell patients, restructure of services and redeployment of staff, it was inevitable that teaching on clinical placement would be compromised.

Aim: The aim of the study was to develop an innovative near-peer educational programme with integrated simulation to support the learning needs of students and alleviate pressure from clinical specialities.

Methods: The team developed a programme whereby students attended a full day of protected small-group teaching each week, equating to a total of 72 taught hours per student over an 8-week placement. Each day centred around a common theme, for example, 'the breathless patient', working through patient-centred case discussion, diagnostic workshops and simulation (Figure 1). The sessions integrated knowledge with realistic simulation scenarios, practical skills, communication skills, diagnostic interpretation and human factors in a safe environment. To complement the teaching, the team introduced mentors, allowing us to provide support and individual constructive feedback to aid professional development from student to safe, competent and confident doctor.

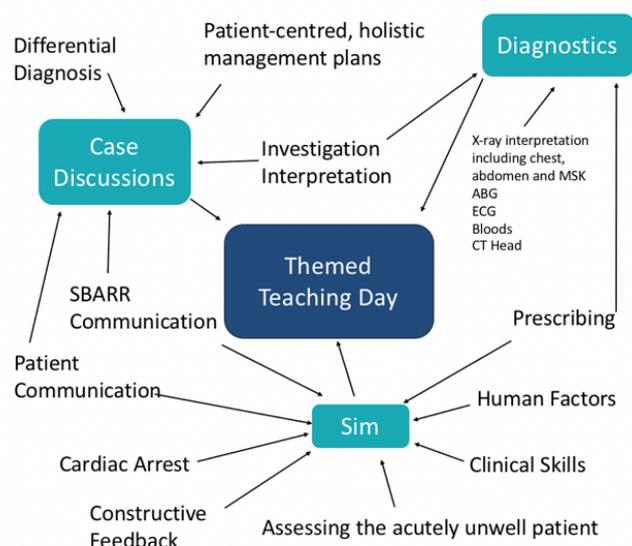


Figure 1: Integrated design of the themed teaching days delivered to final-year students.

Implementation outline: This innovative teaching programme was implemented over the 2020–2021 academic year and was well received by students as evidenced in the following feedback:

- 'It was really helpful and interesting to have each teaching day themed on a presenting complaint'.
- 'Protected time so (we) do not miss out if clinicians are busy'
- 'The best teaching I have had during medical school (...) I loved how interactive, clinically focussed and relevant to F1/F2 each teaching day was'.
- 'Consistently received feedback which I have been able to act upon to improve my clinical practice'
- 'The improvement in my confidence, understanding & knowledge has been unbelievable'
- 'Simulation session was really useful and enjoyable (...) watching and feeding back is a really helpful way to recognize different clinical presentations and critically analyse ABCDE assessment & communication skills'
- 'These teaching sessions are great and unlike anything normally provided on placement'.

The teaching programme has proved to be of such success that the team continue to develop them to integrate further aspects of clinical practice and inter-professional simulation. Furthermore, the team hope to develop themed teaching days for other student year groups to complement their clinical placements.

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CORE CARE SKILLS SIMULATION TRAINING FOR UNDERGRADUATE MEDICAL STUDENTS

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Background: Throughout the coronavirus pandemic, healthcare professionals have needed to rapidly adapt to changing demands. For some, this has involved adapting a 'task-sharing' approach which means that professionals undertake tasks that are not usually considered part of their job role, for example, Junior doctors giving medications and many were 'redeployed' completely to areas of greater need. In the same vein, the role of the medical student was expanded and explored and some medical students were given the opportunity to undertake paid work as healthcare support workers (HCSWs). It can be argued that the education and training of medical students are heavily focussed on a medical model of healthcare and often lacks depth insight into the caring aspects of patient care.

Aim: The aim of the study was to create an interactive practical care skills simulation training aimed at medical students.

Method/design: We designed a practical simulation training programme based around the 'fundamentals of care' as defined by the nursing and midwifery council^[1]. It was delivered over a half day (3 hours) and involved explanation, discussion and practice of basic care skills that would be needed, including clinical observations, nutrition and hydration, bowel and bladder care, personal care (including some basic moving and handling) and last offices. This was based around a patient care scenario, with students required to interact with the manikin and each other as they would in practice, allowing them to practice interpersonal skills as well as the practical aspects of care.

Implementation outline: Early versions of this course were used as part of a comprehensive induction programme that included testimony from HCSWs working within the site