Structured Clinical Skills Education Adds Value to Self-directed Learning during Clinical Placement Time

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Clinical exposure for students is becoming a limited resource. This presentation will delineate some educational strategies that may help to optimally prime students for learning in the clinical environment.

Background

Final year medical students at Monash University undergo six six-week ward placements, plus a five day Patient Safety Unit interspersed throughout the year. The Patient Safety learning activities include simulation scenarios, workshops, lectures, discussion, games, readings and on-line activities(1). Feedback from students during the first year (2006) of the Patient Safety unit suggested that the contact days were influencing the way they learned during subsequent clinical placements. This warranted further exploration.

Methods

Student responses to a combination of open and closed questions were sought, (n = 161 and 92% response rate).

Results
This data revealed 84% of students strongly agreed that the Patient Safety Unit enhanced learning during clinical placements. The major themes emerging from the responses to the question “If the Patient Safety unit enhanced your learning during clinical rotations please describe how” include improved confidence, better clinical skills, awareness of patient safety, ability to reflect and critique self and others, enhanced communication and clearer thought processes. The authors will elaborate on this data and share their thoughts on what aspects of the Patient Safety program may be responsible for the effect on learning in the clinical environment.

**Conclusions**

Our data suggests that “time out” of the clinical environment, if well used, can enhance “time in” the clinical environment.