Integrating simulation across the curriculum: demonstration of practice based simulation model that uses simulation as a core of learning activities

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**Aim:** Explore the impact of an integrated simulation approach on the level of clinical preparedness in psychiatric nursing for 2nd year undergraduate nursing students.

**Background:** Undergraduate Bachelor of Nursing students at Holmesglen are undertaking an innovative, contemporary and integrated curriculum, which is presented in a cross-curriculum format. The course philosophy encompasses teaching strategies such as case-based learning, skill acquisition over multiple modalities such as standardised patients, manikin-based and part-task trainers. Although there are numerous studies on the influence of simulation on practiceready registered nurses, the research is limited on the influence simulation has in an undergraduate curriculum and level of preparedness for mental health placement. It is recognised that students generally find the prospect of their mental health placement, anxiety provoking. Research suggests that due to higher discharge acuity, confidentiality issues, and third party clinical observer hindrance in psychiatric nursing, students may not be given adequate learning opportunities on placement. Therefore realistic simulation scenarios are a priority in order to address placement shortfalls. Throughout the semester students engage in interactive lectures and tutorials, and skills labs with a communication and assessment focus. Students are exposed to a psychiatric assessment simulation with standardised patients where therapeutic rapport, communication and assessment skills are assessed. The ultimate focus is the merging of the theoretical-practical skill gap that many
emerging nurses display, with a particular focus on providing opportunities for engaging in scenarios that may be unattainable in a clinical setting.

Methods: A qualitative study was conducted to explore whether psychiatric simulation assisted 2nd year undergraduate Bachelor of Nursing students in preparedness for their mental health placement. Students completed a questionnaire pre and post clinical placement to determine whether the simulation’s improved their confidence about communication and assessment skill development. Questionnaires were also conducted with clinical facilitators’ and staff working with students about their preparedness for clinical placement, and the student’s level of confidence with clinical skills.

Reference List: