

Building autonomy - evaluating the impact of a simulated placement for final year diagnostic radiography students

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Citation:

BATTY, Helen, HUGHES, James and SHUTE, Elizabeth (2024). Building autonomy - evaluating the impact of a simulated placement for final year diagnostic radiography students. In: UKIO Imaging and Oncology Congress 2024, Liverpool, 10 Jun 2024 - 12 Jun 2024. [Conference or Workshop Item]

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Building Autonomy: Evaluating the Impact of a Simulated Placement for Final Year Diagnostic Imaging Students

Background

Simulated practice education has been demonstrated to effectively prepare students for the transition from student to qualified practitioner (Hough et al., 2019) and is a valuable pedagogical approach for diagnostic radiography education. This approach ensures a secure and consistent learning environment, fostering active learning and competency building without compromising patient safety, (Tuttle and Horan 2019). Previous research has acknowledged the efficacy of simulated placements in enhancing the preparedness of first-year radiography students for clinical practice (Partner et al 2022). A gap remains in understanding the impact of such placements for final-year students on their transition to autonomous practitioner.

Method

Final-year radiography students completed a two-week simulated placement involving clinical scenarios with actors, relevant e-learning and reflective activities. Debriefing played a crucial role in enriching the learning experience (Zhang et al. 2019). Students completed an evaluation questionnaire. A Likert scale (0-5) and open-ended questions for qualitative insights were used. Data was analysed using descriptive and thematic analyses.

Results

Fifteen students from a cohort of 49, completed the questionnaire. The majority of respondents recognised the value of the simulated placement in enhancing their development as radiographers. Participants found the simulation weeks engaging and interesting, with positive impacts on their clinical skills, communication and reflective skills. Participants felt the experience contributed to a deeper understanding of professional behaviours and expectations, and had enhanced their confidence for autonomous practice.

Conclusion

Despite a small number of respondents, findings suggest that a well-structured simulated placement for final-year radiography students can significantly contribute to their development as autonomous practitioners.

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