

CONFERENCE REPORT

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Second International Clinical Skills Conference **Teaching, learning and assessing clinical skills: Does one size fit all?** Prato Monash Centre, Tuscany, Italy 1st-4th July 2007

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This conference was the 2nd annual International Clinical Skills Conference. The conference was attended by over 250 hundred delegates from 15 countries from a wide spectrum of health professional backgrounds, held at the Prato Monash Centre, Tuscany, Italy. The conference was convened by an international steering committee co-ordinated by the Centre for Medical and Health Sciences Education, Monash University. The conference aimed to meet the needs of interprofessional education researchers, clinical practitioners and educators involved in simulation education in all aspects of clinical health care.

Numerous pre-conference workshops were offered providing delegates with a wide selection including:

- Bedside teaching approaches
- Use of mind-mapping for clinical teaching
- Developing effective supervision in clinical education
- Developing a tool to assess junior doctors in a simulated workplace environment
- Developing mobile simulation labs
- Linking teaching and assessment in clinical settings

The conference ran over four days with the theme of the conference being teaching, learning and assessing clinical skills and followed 4 themes that included the following:

Theme 1: Practising safely and Professionally

- Interprofessional Education
- Ethics, gender, attitudes and reflective practices
- Communication skills
- Professionalism and non-technical skills development
- Patient safety

Theme 2: Developing competent skills for practice

- Teaching technical/procedural/practical skills
- Assessment of clinical skills/competence

- Alternative methods of skills teaching
- Learning clinical skills in alternative contexts

Theme 3: Preparing health professionals for the world of work

- Simulation to practice/theory to practice
- Clinical supervision and feedback
- Workplace learning
- Teachers and facilitators of clinical skills (including peer teaching)
- Educational/curriculum/organisational development

Theme 4: Improving simulation for learning

- Simulation
- Technologically enriched learning/on-line enhancement to clinical education
- Simulated patients

Up to 4 concurrent sessions were offered to delegates. There were three categories of oral presentations, research papers (full papers) 15 minutes presentation time, work in progress (brief papers) 12 minutes presentation time and posters 5 minute presentation time. Additional time was provided for delegate questions.

The conference committee invited seven keynote presenters namely, Paul Bradley, Cathy Heaven, Pamela Jeffries, Sue Kilminster, Malcolm Parker, John Sandars and John Spencer. Of particular note was Dr Cathy Heaven's presentation on the notion of theory transfer. This presentation emphasised that unless some guarantee of knowledge and understanding is applied in a timely clinical sense then teaching and learning are possible ineffective and should be urgently evaluated. The keynotes were not only dynamic, informative but importantly integrated the concurrent themes effectively, allowing delegates to form new ideas and potential research projects.

Other noteworthy sessions included: Brendan Flanagan from (Southern Health Simulation Centre, Melbourne) and his research team of Julia Harrison, Jennifer Hogan and Stuart Hill. Brendan and his team presented four papers during the conference, all supplementing the contemporary work being undertaken at the simulation centre.

Numerous papers included the notion of interprofessional education and how this approach could add value to clinical settings. Other 'common' papers included descriptions of clinical simulation labs. However, whilst of interest, unfortunately, many of these papers did not use valid or reliable evaluation instruments thereby reducing the scientific rigour. Nonetheless, how different simulation centres undertake clinical teaching and assessment is exciting.

A new inclusion into this year's conference was the invitation to publish in the ANZAME journal. A group of rapporteurs and their teams reviewed the most noteworthy papers over the three days for potential invitation to publish their research. Rapporteurs and their teams met nightly to discuss findings from the day's presentations. At time of writing, no announcement of the recipients had been made.

In closing, the overall organisation and quality of presentations was generally excellent. Many new teaching, learning and assessment ideas were offered as were potential collaborative research opportunities. It was energizing to see a broad range of health care

professionals attending and presenting at the conference. I urge you look out for the 3rd International Clinical Skills Conference in 2009.

Acknowledgment

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