

“Lights, Camera and... Action.” *Librarians as Simulated Patients:* A new frontier for student skills development.

Madeleine Bruwer, Barbara Yazbeck, Maxine Cuskelly

Definitions

A simulated patient is, “someone who has been trained to portray a character in a scripted case scenario and who is able to consistently deliver similar performance when interacting with different students” (Rickles, Tieu, Myers, Galal, & Chung, 2009).

A simulated patient:

- Uses a script to prompt a real life interaction.
- Can be used for interprofessional communication and patient focused communication skills.

Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs) are performance based assessments that test students’ interpersonal skills and clinical knowledge by presenting them with a short clinical scenario. This involves the use of simulated patients to develop and assess interpersonal and communication skills.

Rationale

Simulated patients provide a ‘safe’ contextual experience in which students can practise, and receive feedback on communication skills.

Benefits

According to Barrows (1993) simulated patients provide:

- Flexibility (not constrained by time or place).
- Consistency (presenting students with the same clinical and communication problem).
- An opportunity for inexperienced students to build confidence.

Challenges

- Administrative burden (recruiting, training, scheduling).
- Time consuming and labour intensive to train simulated patients.
- Paid simulated patients require significant funding.

Scope

In 2011, the Faculty of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences at Monash University introduced OSCEs into a second year core unit, which were subsequently rolled out across the curriculum.

Initially, C L Butchers Pharmacy Library staff made up of librarians and learning skills advisers (LSAs), were approached to participate in TOSCEs (Teaching OSCEs) as observers. Our expertise was recognised, and since then our role has expanded to acting as simulated patients in lectures and workshops throughout the semester and in the examinations.

Approach

- At Monash University, librarians work with LSAs to embed a range of research and learning skills, including employability skills.
- In the case of OSCEs, librarians and LSAs receive scenarios in advance and prepare as simulated patients.
- Librarians as simulated patients may be used in a range of settings including as guest lecturers in lectures, tutors in TOSCEs, or work with faculty to assess candidates in examinations and in individual or group student consultations.

Engagement by library staff, 2011-2016

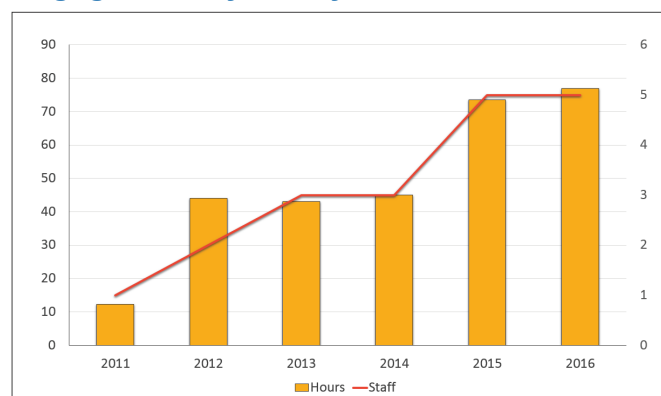


Figure 1. Library involvement as simulated patients in OSCEs from 2011-2016.

Why do librarians make good simulated patients?

- Librarians are patients too! They can leverage their position as stakeholders in the curriculum and as members of the public.
- Students are familiar and comfortable with library staff.
- Library staff enjoy interacting with students, and watching them gain confidence in their abilities.

Simulated patient roleplay



What benefits does involvement in communication training bring to libraries?



Conclusion

This novel approach of engaging librarians and learning skills advisers in the curriculum acknowledges our professional competencies, and offers new opportunities for medical librarians to partner with faculty in preparing and developing career-ready pharmacists.

Dedication

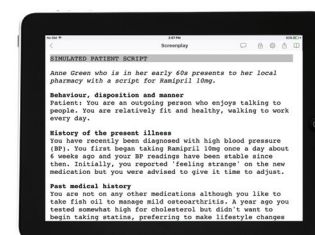
We dedicate this poster to our University Librarian, Cathrine Harboe-Ree.

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to C L Butchers Pharmacy Library staff, especially to Melissa McKenna for graphic design. A special thanks to our student Kimberly Rose Yu-Zhu Guo (pictured).

References

- Adrian, J. A., Zeszotarski, P., & Ma, C. (2015). Developing pharmacy student communication skills through role-playing and active learning. *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education*, 79(3), 1-8.
- Barrows, H. S. (1993). An overview of the uses of standardized patients for teaching and evaluating clinical skills. *Academic Medicine*, 68(6), 443-51.
- Harrod, T. P., & Gomes, A. W. (2017). Creative Curriculum: The Experience of Writing and Teaching Formative Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (FOSCEs). *Medical Reference Services Quarterly*, 36(2), 111-119. doi: 10.1080/02763869.2017.1293968
- Hussainy, S. Y., Styles, K., & Duncan, G. (2012). A virtual practice environment to develop communication skills in pharmacy students. *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education*, 76(10), 202.
- Monash University. (2015). *Focus Monash: Strategic Plan 2015-2020*. Retrieved from <http://www.monash.edu/about/who/strategic-plan>
- Monash University Library. (2017). *Focus Library: Monash University Library Annual Plan 2017*.
- Nestel, D., Calandra, A., & Elliot, R. (2015). Using volunteer simulated patients in development of pre-registration pharmacists: Learning from the experience. *Pharmacy Education*, 7. Retrieved from <http://pharmacyeducation.fip.org/pharmacyeducation/article/view/232>
- Rickles, N. M., Tieu, P., Myers, L., Galal, S., & Chung, V. (2009). The impact of a standardized patient program on student learning of communication skills. *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education*, 73(1), 1-4.
- Wallman, A., Vaudan, C., & Sporrang, S. K. (2013). Communications training in pharmacy education, 1995-2010. *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education*, 77(2), 16-36.



To listen to the simulated patient roleplay, please scan the QR Code.

