

Fit for purpose?

Does practice based learning equip Physiotherapy Students for employment in 21st Century Health and Social Care?

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BACKGROUND

Traditionally physiotherapy practice placements have been organised around core clinical specialties; musculoskeletal, cardiorespiratory and neurological physiotherapy practice. Whilst such specialisms still exist in clinical practice, the scope and delivery of Health and Social Care has changed immeasurably and these narrow descriptors are no longer appropriate.

As a Practice Education Team we have endeavoured to move away from a specialty specific model of placement learning to one, which focusses on the acquisition of transferable skills and knowledge. It is envisaged that this should enable our students to develop the necessary skillset, knowledge and personal attributes that will allow them to secure employment in the current healthcare economy.

To support this transition, an enquiry into the skills, knowledge and attributes (SKA) attainable within current practice placement settings was needed.

AIM

- ① To identify the key SKA students both gain and require when undertaking practice based learning in the North West of England.
- ② To ascertain how essential or desirable the students' possession of specific SKA are to Educators in practice.
- ③ To demonstrate to stakeholders that practice based learning is equipping physiotherapy students with the key transferable SKA required for employment

DESIGN

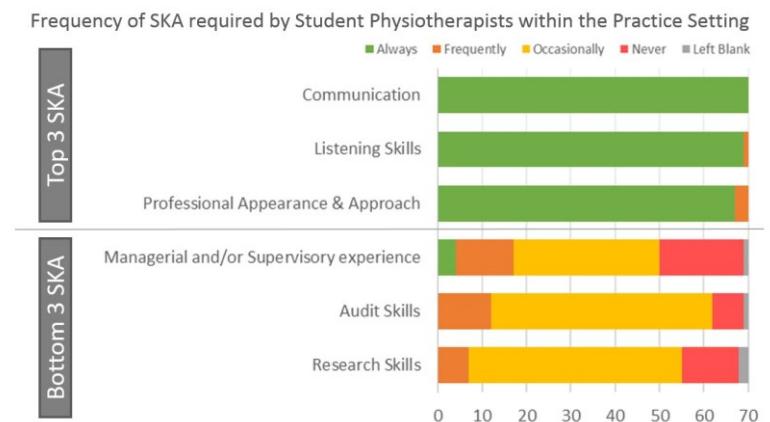
An audit tool (survey) focusing on three key elements was emailed to Practice Educators across the North West region.

The survey sought to capture;

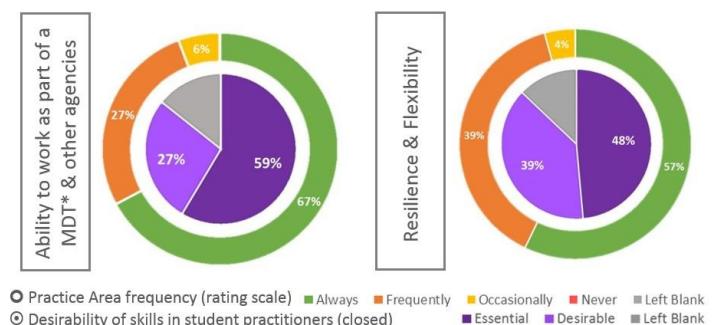
- 1) how often student Physiotherapists required 27 key SKA when working within the Educators practice setting (rating scale)
- 2) the desirability of these 27 SKA in student practitioners (closed question)
- 3) any additional core skills and knowledge that student Physiotherapists could gain within their specific practice setting (free text).

FINDINGS

The audit generated 70 responses from 25 North West NHS Trusts and 1 private provider. The main focus of the data presented below relates to an analysis of the responses to 8 of the 27 unique SKA required frequency question (rating scale).



In light of the changing landscape of practice, the requirement to equip Student Physiotherapists with particular SKA takes on more importance [below].



DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

The findings of our enquiry suggest that the fundamental foundations of Professional Practice; communication, listening skills and professional appearance and approach are well established within the Student Physiotherapists Practice Placement experience.

However, the responses highlight there is a notable disconnect between the Professional Regulatory Bodies (CSP, HCPC) driver to deliver an evidence based, autonomous practitioner equipped with leadership skills, and the current placement SKA requirements for student practitioners.

In September 2017, a tripartite workshop will further explore the questions raised by this survey. This workshop will include an examination of the decision by some not to log an answer for all 27 unique SKA (blanks). A decision that could infer a lack of clarity or confidence with the emerging SKA terms and labels associated with evidence based autonomous practice within practice settings.

REFERENCES

- Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (2015) *Learning and Development Principles for CSP Accreditation of Qualifying Programmes in Physiotherapy*. CSP, London.
- Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (2013) *CSP (2011) Physiotherapy Framework: putting physiotherapy behaviours, values, knowledge & skills into practice [updated Sept 2013]*. CSP, London.