

Exploring an interprofessional approach to workplace-based assessment.



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Background

Workplace-based assessments are commonly used within healthcare, including in pharmacy and medicine. Many of the current workplace-based assessments are profession specific. With the increasing emphasis on enhancing the quality of workplace-based training, the limited human resourcing for teaching, and the importance of interprofessional collaborative practice, it is worth considering whether an interprofessional approach to assessment can enrich learning in the work setting.

Aim

To explore the views of medical officers and pharmacists on workplace-based assessments where the assessor and learner are from different professions.

Methods

Pharmacists who have previously been residents of the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) Residency Program and medical officers who were assessors for the Australian Medical Council Workplace-based Assessment (AMC WBA) program at the study site were invited to participate. One-on-one semi-structured interviews were undertaken to explore participants' experience with and thoughts on interprofessional feedback and assessment. Interviews were held either face-to-face or online and recorded to allow for transcription. Transcriptions were deidentified and thematic analysis was undertaken to identify key themes.

Results

Five interviews were conducted, including three pharmacists and two medical officers. Two participants had experience as learners for workplace-based assessments, two had experience as assessors, and one had experience as both.

Table 1: Participant demographics

	Overall	Pharmacist	Medical Officer
Participants	5	3 (60%)	2 (40%)
Age			
Min - Max	28-42	28-34	41-42
Gender			
Male	1 (20%)	0	1
Female	4 (80%)	3	1
Role			
Assessor	3* (50%)	1*	2
Learner	3 (50%)	3	0
Program			
SHPA Residency	3 (60%)	3	0
AMC WBA Program	2 (40%)	0	2

*One participant indicated their role has been as both an assessor and a learner

All participants identified that interprofessional feedback was seen as valuable in providing a different perspective from within the healthcare team.

"It's really good to get that perspective from external people because they're the ones who you're working with and collaborating with" - Pharmacist

"It may not have to do with, how up-to-date your recommendations were, how evidence-based it was, but it may have to do with 'how was your communication', 'how was your bedside manner'..." - Medical Officer

Time constraints and workload pressures were commonly identified as potential barriers to implementing interprofessional workplace-based assessments.

"Finding the time for people with their varying clinical load and rosters to be able to sit down and [implement interprofessional WBA]" - Pharmacist

"Whether their discipline allocates any non-clinical time, or whether they are always on clinical duties and this will be something extra." - Medical Officer

To support the implementation of interprofessional feedback, the importance of having a formalised process that was created through collaboration from all professions was highlighted.

"Include getting input from all the disciplines and including junior staff and up to senior staff" - Pharmacist

"We should have ... everyone on the same page and have a clear outline of expectations" - Medical Officer

Discussion

This study has demonstrated that there is a perceived benefit to an interprofessional workplace-based assessment model. Whilst barriers to implementation exist, these are also commonly reported in undertaking uniprofessional workplace-based assessments. By using a collaborative change management process, implementation of such a model could be supported.

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