



INTRODUCTION

The post-graduate Doctorate in Pharmacy degree, run by the University of Malta in collaboration with the University of Illinois, Chicago, enables students to carry out a six-week advanced experiential placement. Doctorate students can opt for a Medicines Information placement at Mater Dei Hospital during this time. Providing drug information is a core responsibility of pharmacists, and pharmacists need to be skilful in information retrieval, interpretation and clinical application. One of the aims of the placement is for the development of critical appraisal skills of literature.

AIM

- To describe the structure developed for the critique of a published study during experiential placements at Medicines Information
- To outline the approach utilised for doctorate students to enhance their critical literature appraisal skills

METHOD

A published study related to a topic encountered during clinical practice is chosen by the preceptors. The article is selected from a peer-reviewed journal based on its clinical relevance or educational value. The study is assigned to the doctorate students during their experiential placement and the preceptor explains the process of the task as described in Figure 1. Students are expected to apply critical literature evaluation skills simulating real-life situations and are assessed for reporting, analysing and appraising scientific research.

RESULTS

Between February 2019 and February 2020, ten students attended the Advanced Experiential placement at Medicines Information Section and presented the critique of the published article using slides to help convey the data under discussion. During presentation of the article, students delivered the fundamentals of the published study focusing on the hypothesis, study design including study type, population, randomization, inclusion and exclusion criteria, methodology including outcome measures, results, interpretation of findings including limitations, strengths and weaknesses and the clinical context. This activity evaluates students' ability to critique published clinical studies in addition to enabling an academic discussion with preceptors and other pharmacists.

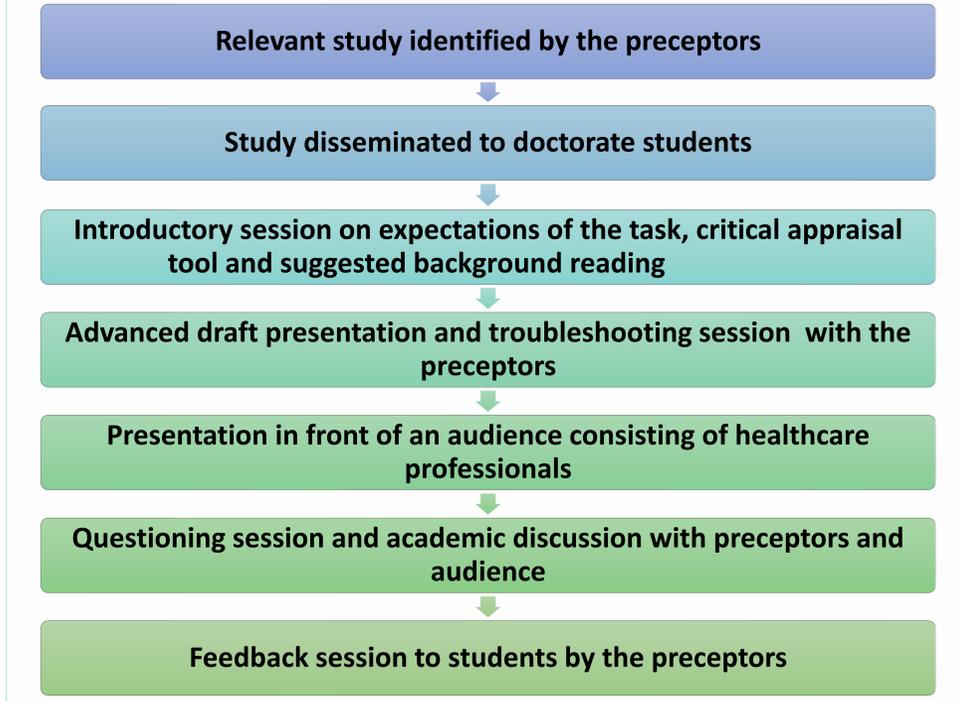


Figure 1: Outline of the Critique of a Published Study Process

CONCLUSION

In a time where information is constantly being presented, it is a challenge to assess the validity, reliability and relevance of information. This educational activity enables students to improve knowledge and critical appraisal skills to analyse presented information as well as keep up to date with published literature.

REFERENCES

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