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Abstract: Shared learning between different groups of healthcare professionals promotes respect for and a deeper understanding, of the role of each healthcare professional within the multidisciplinary team. Shared teaching in a classroom does not necessarily facilitate shared learning and deep learning is more likely to occur, when students have the opportunity for problem based learning in a 'real' context. Shared learning works well when there is a common goal, mutual respect, mutual benefit and a balance of power between the different groups involved. Two such groups are undergraduate podiatry and pharmacy students. By year 4, the pharmacy students have acquired a broad knowledge base including pharmacology and medicine from which to further develop their skills required for medicines reviews. However, placement opportunities offer limited experience of assessing patients on an individual basis. In contrast, podiatry students take responsibility for individual patient care on a regular basis from the second semester in their 1st year. Podiatry students therefore become skilled early on in communication, patient assessment and management planning. During routine patient assessment, podiatry students obtain a drug history as a component of the medical history. The extended consultation time with students affords an excellent opportunity, for a more comprehensive medicines review by a supervised pharmacy student. By working together in the clinical setting, these two groups of students bring mutually beneficial experience and skill sets. The common goal for the students is the care and wellbeing of an individual patient.
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Podiatry and pharmacy – an equal partnership for shared clinical learning.

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Background
Shared learning between different groups of healthcare professionals promotes respect for and a deeper understanding of the role of each healthcare professional within the multidisciplinary team.

Shared teaching in a classroom does not necessarily facilitate shared learning and deep learning is more likely to occur, when students have the opportunity for problem based learning in a ‘real’ context. Shared learning works well when there is a common goal, mutual respect, mutual benefit and a balance of power between the different groups involved. Two such groups are undergraduate podiatry and pharmacy students.

By year 4, the pharmacy students have acquired a broad knowledge base including pharmacology and medicine from which to further develop their skills required for medicines reviews. However, placement opportunities offer limited experience of assessing patients on an individual basis. In contrast, podiatry students take responsibility for individual patient care on a regular basis from the second semester in their 1st year. Podiatry students therefore become skilled early on in communication, patient assessment and management planning.

During routine patient assessment, podiatry students obtain a drug history as a component of the medical history. The extended consultation time with students affords an excellent opportunity, for a more comprehensive medicines review by a supervised pharmacy student.

By working together in the clinical setting, these two groups of students bring mutually beneficial experience and skill sets. The common goal for the students is the care and wellbeing of an individual patient.

Methods
This pilot project was carried out in the Allied Health Clinic, Charles Sturt University, NSW. The project ran over a 3-day period and involved a group of eight, year 4 pharmacy students, working alongside podiatry students from years 2 to 4.

Learning outcomes for each of the student groups were developed to analyse interdisciplinary collaboration between podiatrists and pharmacists; evaluate the process of drug history taking; justify the patient’s use of over the counter (OTC) and prescription drugs, in the context of their medical history and identify potential medication related problems; evaluate the role of the podiatrist/pharmacist team in the identification and reporting of adverse drug effects.

During the pilot project, a total of 95 patients were seen jointly by the podiatry and pharmacy students and the project was evaluated from the perspective of all those involved.

Results / Discussion
From the patient perspective it was “a wonderful experience”. They found the pharmacy students to be very helpful and a good resource to ask about future medication such as herbal medicines.

The podiatry students appreciated the ‘extra dimension’ to clinic and benefited from the additional knowledge offered by the pharmacy students. Pharmacy students enjoyed gaining knowledge about podiatry as another health discipline and were most appreciative of the clinical setting, which enabled a personal discussion with each patient. “Working with pharmacy academics in a clinical setting was extremely beneficial and much better than ordinary placements.”

Both pharmacy students and staff commented on the good communication skills of the podiatry students. Pharmacy staff highlighted the benefits of multidisciplinary working and the opportunity for pharmacy students to learn about the ‘patient experience’. Their professional expertise and input was much appreciated by the attending podiatry staff.
A quantitative measure of the students’ learning experience was obtained using a 10cm visual analogue scale, with a spectrum of ‘very poor’ to ‘excellent’. Mean results for each student group are represented below:

Podiatry students: Year 2 - 7.83; Year 3 - 7.5; Year 4 - 7.63
Pharmacy students: 8.83

There was some variation in responses between the student groups, with the pharmacy students rating the shared learning experience more highly. There were small variations in responses between the different podiatry year groups, with the 2nd year students being generally more receptive to the experience.

Conclusion
The podiatry clinical setting provides an excellent opportunity for shared learning between podiatry and pharmacy students.

“It reinforces the pharmacology we have already learned” (3rd year podiatry student). “I think this would be a great idea for the future as it was a very interesting day, which improved my communication skills and home medication review” (pharmacy student). “Great for multidisciplinary team building and networking (4th year podiatry student).