

Two simulated paramedic night shifts: The perceived value of experiential learning

Alecka Miles, Sara Hansen, Lisa Holmes & Brennen Mills
Edith Cowan University

Criticism surrounds the paramedic profession and other healthcare professions regarding the efficacy of Australian Universities in preparing graduates who are 'job ready'. An emerging theme in the literature is that graduates lack essential communication and interpersonal skills, on-road experience (clinical placement) and often the maturity required to undertake shift work and the professional role of a paramedic.

In 2017 we trialled and evaluated a single simulated paramedic night shift held on-campus for second-year undergraduate paramedicine students. In 2018, we replicated this trial with two simulated night shifts. This event allowed students to put into practice application of knowledge of skills under actual shift-length and roster rotation conditions, inclusive of transporting patients to and from 'the hospital'.

A total of 12 second-year paramedical science students were recruited. Participants were exposed to twenty clinical scenarios of the course of the two nights. Fifteen patient 'actors' (primarily first-year paramedicine students) undertook a three-hour training session in the lead up to data collection to familiarise themselves with the scenario specifics, and to standardise responses across scenarios. Students completed an online survey the day after each night shift.

This presentation will discuss the teaching and learning benefits in higher education as well as the limitations of staging two simulated paramedic night shifts. It will also examine the students' perceived value of this innovative learning experience.