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Clinical education: An analysis of clinical reasoning amongst physiotherapy students in Fiji

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Clinical reasoning is a key competency in any physiotherapy clinical education academic program. A clear and structured thought process informing practice is critical in the clinician's ability to make good decisions. 41 undergraduate physiotherapy students, in their 3rd and 4th year from the Fiji National University were assessed on their ability to make decisions on ill-defined cues via clinical vignettes. The Script Concordance Test (SCT) with the pass mark standardized at one standard deviation from the class mean score was the assessment tool used to analyze diagnostic clinical reasoning in undergraduate physiotherapy students. Third year students demonstrated a mean score of 59.32%±8.03 while the fourth years scored a slightly higher mean score of 64.97%±10.17 in concordance to the reference norms set by the expert clinicians. There were no significant differences between the 3th to 4th year (p value=0.29) and the 3rd year to the expert (p value=0.40) scores. There were also no significant differences in the 4th year to the expert (p value=0.55) scores. Increasing exposure to clinical experience may have had some effect on increasing levels of clinical reasoning but was not significant. An exposure to an environment that allows for harnessing of thinking skills may be more important in leveraging clinical making abilities. Interventions that help students make good decisions is crucial in training them to be good clinicians. The SCT is a valid assessment tool for psychometric analysis of clinical reasoning amongst physiotherapy students.

Biography

Venasio Ramabuke is currently pursuing his Masters of Education from the University of the South Pacific. He is also a Lecturer for the Physiotherapy program at the College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences-Fiji National University. He has completed his Basic Physiotherapy studies at the Fiji School of Medicine in 2001, before completing his Bachelor's degree in Sport and Exercise Science from the University of the Sunshine Coast, Queensland. He has been working as a Clinical Physiotherapist prior to taking up an academic role.

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