

QUALITATIVE EXPLORATION OF PRECEPTOR ASSESSMENT PRACTICES OF STUDENT PHARMACOLOGY KNOWLEDGE IN A DISTRIBUTED VETERINARY MEDICAL CLINICAL CURRICULUM

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Veterinary medical graduates are expected to be competent in clinical pharmacology. During training in a distributive clinical curriculum, the assessment of student knowledge and skills in pharmacology is performed, in part, by third party preceptors. Understanding how preceptors assess student competence in pharmacology is essential to maintaining course alignment. Thus, the objective of this study is to explore how third party preceptors assess student competency in pharmacology. Specifically, what actions, behaviors, and attitudes of students do preceptors use to assess student pharmacology knowledge? Does preceptor assessment of pharmacology knowledge and skills align with course-specific learning objectives and goals? To answer these questions, a qualitative study was conducted to explore the preceptor's experience when assessing student knowledge in pharmacology. Maximal diversity sampling was undertaken to select which preceptors to include in the study. Recorded interviews were qualitatively analyzed for emergent themes that illuminate the preceptor's experience of assessing student knowledge. Preliminary results have identified emergent themes including the expectation of codified knowledge versus procedural knowledge, preceptor styles of inquiry, and perceived student enthusiasm and engagement in their clinical patients. Preceptors described a wide range of behaviors as competence. Review of course syllabi revealed generalized expectations for clinical skills, but not pharmacology-specific knowledge and skills. Thus, there appears to be misalignment between course objectives and preceptor assessment. In conclusion, gaps between course objectives and preceptor assessment have been identified and explored. Understanding the assessment process used by preceptors can assist curricular designers and course leaders to ensure course and curricular alignment.