

## IN PRACTICE

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# IMPLEMENTING A SIMULATED TRAINING PACKAGE TO UPSKILL UNDERGRADUATE PHARMACY STUDENTS TO DELIVER NHS HEALTH CHECKS IN A STUDENT-LED SERVICE

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**Introduction:** Identification and prevention of cardiovascular disease (CVD) was identified as the single biggest area where the NHS can save lives in the NHS Long-term plan [1]. The NHS Health Check screening aims to assess a person's risk of developing CVD, type 2 diabetes and dementia and offer advice to help people maintain or improve their health [2]. Student-led health check clinics have been implemented in other universities, proving to be a viable mechanism to deliver Experiential Learning, while providing health services to an underserved population [3]. A robust training programme was required, ensuring students to develop skills whilst also demonstrating competence to deliver the service.

**Methods:** A bespoke training package was collaboratively designed by practitioners, simulation faculty and practice partners to support skill development and demonstration of competence.

Alongside a programme of traditional teaching (incorporating clinical and consultation skills) and mandatory training, two half-day in-person simulation sessions were used to consolidate learning and allow for exploration of key concepts prior to launch of the service. In the first of these two sessions, an AI-enabled manikin was utilised to allow students a safe opportunity to undertake a full protocol-based CVD screening assessment. In the second session, standardised patient actors were used to provide students an opportunity to combine both clinical and consultation skills.

Following the simulated events, assessment of student competence was conducted. Using standardised patients in a controlled environment, students were tested against a nested Entrustable Professional Activity (EPA), encompassing key components of the health check.

**Results:** All 153 students passed the competency assessment following the training.

A University-based health check service for staff and students led by pharmacy students under supervision by qualified practitioners was subsequently launched. Student-led CVD screening in the community will commence from the 25–26 academic year, in collaboration with a local primary care network.

Evaluation is ongoing, focussing on student views of the training. Initial responses suggest the simulated placements were well situated in terms of wider taught content and that, following completion of the training programme, students felt able to safely perform an NHS Health Check.

**Discussion:** Development and implementation of a comprehensive training package, incorporating traditional and simulated learning methodologies, has successfully facilitated the establishment of a student-led health check service within the University. Student performance and initial student feedback regarding their perceived competence to

safely perform the service highlights the effectiveness of this approach in preparing future pharmacists for expanded roles in preventative healthcare.

**Ethics Statement:** As the submitting author, I can confirm that all relevant ethical standards of research and dissemination have been met. Additionally, I can confirm that the necessary ethical approval has been obtained, where applicable.

## REFERENCES

1. NHS. The NHS long term plan. 2019. Available from: <https://www.longtermplan.nhs.uk/>. Accessed 24 April 2025.
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3. Maughan E, Richardson C, Nazar H. A cross-sectional investigation of a mobile health clinic run by undergraduate pharmacy students providing services to underserved communities. *Int J Clin Pharm*. 2024 Dec;46(6):1546–1551. doi: 10.1007/s11096-024-01783-1.