

INTRODUCTION

The Drug Information and Statistics study unit is one of the study-units within the Doctorate in Pharmacy programme, being offered by the University of Malta in collaboration with the College of Pharmacy of the University of Illinois in Chicago, USA. This unit presents an overview of drug information sources used in healthcare. Students are exposed to the critical evaluation of literature in a systematic approach. Aspects required in the use of evidence-based medical literature, in the retrieval and analysis of information and literature evaluation for disease state management policies are discussed.

AIM

To evaluate the outcomes of an assignment given to students as part of this study unit to enhance their skills in the retrieval and analysis of data

METHOD

- A three-hour tutorial focusing on a discussion regarding the off-label use of orphan medicinal products for rare diseases, using an article by Dooms et al¹, was held.
- The assignment consisted of each student answering a set of questions to reflect on the article and were asked to find other relevant literature to support the topic selected.
- They were given one month to complete the assignment, after which they were provided with an evaluation sheet to rate, on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from ‘Strongly Disagree’ to ‘Strongly Agree’, their reflections on the academic exercise.

Statement
Topic selected is interesting
Detail requested is appropriate
Time allocated is appropriate
Assignment stimulated me to learn more about the subject
Skills achieved through assignment helped me in other study units within the course

Table 1: Questions to evaluate the Drug Information and Statistics Assignment

RESULTS

- All students (N=9) registered for the Doctorate in Pharmacy programme participated in the tutorial, of whom 5 were female.
- The mean age was 29 years (range 23-47).
- All students (N=9) strongly agreed that the topic selected was interesting, and six students strongly agreed that the level of detail requested in answering the assignment questions was appropriate.
- Seven students agreed that the one-month timeframe to complete the assignment was adequate.
- Eight students strongly agreed that the assignment stimulated them to learn more about the subject, and four strongly agreed that the skills achieved helped them in other study units within the doctorate programme.

CONCLUSION

This evaluation shows that the students found value in the tutorial and assignment given. The Doctorate in Pharmacy programme leads students to develop critical analysis and literature evaluation within the context of translational and applied evidence-based research in pharmacy.

Reference

¹ Dooms M, Cassiman D, Simoens S. Off-label use of orphan medicinal products: a Belgian qualitative study. Orphanet Journal of Rare Diseases (2016) 11:144-152.