

Objective

To explore post-qualification students' perspectives on the use of Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) as a competency based assessment strategy in post-qualification pharmacy practice education and training.

Method

- ◆ Focus group interviews were conducted with students who had experienced OSCEs at post-qualification level.
- ◆ Invitation to participate was sent through email to 35 students on a Postgraduate Diploma Pharmacy Practice programme. Audio-recorded data was transcribed and anonymised. Conventional content analysis was applied.
- ◆ Ethical approval was granted for the study.

Results

- ◆ Fifteen female students took part in two focus group interviews lasting 30 minutes.
- ◆ OSCEs were viewed as a necessary assessment to endorse clinical skills competency in practice.
- ◆ Failure in the assessment was reported to have more negative significance due to the professionally registered status of participants. Reflection of real life practice was highly important to participants. Quotes from participants are presented below:

"stress, pressure, even though we do it on a daily basis at work, having it in a tested environment and people analysing what you're saying, that makes the difference and it kind of throws you off sometimes"

"I know we've all said negative stuff about it but it's actually, probably the closest thing to like practice like instead of doing written exams and stuff like that, it's probably the closest thing to real practice"

"you feel less pressure on the day if you have experienced it loads of times"

Conclusions

Formative OSCEs should be complementary to other learning methods if eventually used summatively for certification purposes. Wellbeing support systems are essential to guide the development of those needing support following an unsuccessful OSCEs outcome. A limitation in this study was the lack of diversity.

