A study to Investigate undergraduate pharmacy students’ experience of an integrated curriculum.

Hamde Nazar, Ausaf Khan and Andy Husband
School of Pharmacy, Faculty of Medical Sciences, Newcastle University, Newcastle Upon Tyne, UK.

Study Objective
Curriculum integration in pharmacy undergraduate programmes has widely been adopted in the United Kingdom and internationally. The operational and delivery strategies across and within these programmes vary across the continuum of Harden’s ladder of integration. This study aims to investigate the undergraduate student experience of an integrated Master of Pharmacy (MPharm) programme at one School of Pharmacy in England.

Study Design
Undergraduate students in stages 1-3 were invited to participate in a series of focus groups (one per stage) to investigate the experience of teaching and learning within this programme. Subsequent semi-structured interviews were undertaken with students across these cohorts to explore the themes derived from the focus groups (figure 1). Focus group discussions and interviews were audio-recorded with written consent, transcribed verbatim and thematically analysed.

Study Results and Conclusion
Four themes were identified from the thematic analysis. The four themes were: teaching in an integrated curriculum, adjusting to an integrated curriculum, defining curriculum integration, and preparing for the role of a pharmacist. Overall students enjoyed integrated teaching, describing it as allowing them to have crucial problem-solving skills and competencies required for the role of a pharmacist. An integrated MPharm curriculum facilities a student’s appreciation and understanding of the individual disciplines relating to pharmacy and, allows students to feel adequately prepared for their future career as a pharmacist.

Figure 1: Study Design