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Objective: For year 1 MPharm students to experience medicines adherence by taking a placebo for 5 days, reflecting on this experience, completing a formulary entry, identifying their own beliefs about medicines and to discuss adherence with a friend/relative and patients who regularly take prescribed medicines.

Design: The induction activity introduced adherence, provided guidance/support/resources for undertaking reflection and completing a formulary entry (ibuprofen, simvastatin, metformin), and determination of the student’s beliefs about and perceived sensitivity to medicines. The evaluation assessed students’ engagement with the 5 day induction activity and performance through submission of a reflective account, using Gibb’s (1988) model assessed using the REFLECT tool (Wald et al 2012) and a formulary entry. A questionnaire evaluated student experience.

Results: Of the 183 MPharm Y1 students, 174 (95%) participated in the activity, with 173 (95%) submitting a reflective account and 179 (98%) a formulary entry for formative review. Most students identified in their reflection that medicine taking was more challenging than expected. Some compared their experience with their friend/relative but only a few compared their experience to the patients with HIV. No students linked their adherence to their beliefs about medicines. Identification of national guidance was not as well completed as other formulary sections. Many students required referencing support. The post-activity questionnaire was completed by 73 (40%) students with 90% (64/71) recommending the activity. Students definitely or mostly agreed that the activity allowed them to ‘explore adherence from the patient perspective’ (68/72), ‘challenged and stimulated their views’ (59/72) and provided an ‘opportunity to appreciate the pharmacist’s role in supporting patient adherence’ (64/70).

Conclusion: The induction activity enabled students to understand the complexity of medicines adherence and the pharmacist’s role.