

preferred study budget and leave process explained at induction. 47 of 48 responders sought access to their study budget, 46 of 48 responders sought use of budget for external course and exam fees funding, 27 of the 48 responders struggled to get study leave and 27 of 48 responders felt the current leave process was not satisfactory with 14 opining that there was scope for improvement.

**Conclusion.** The responses were collated by the trainee rep as a PowerPoint presentation containing graphical representation of trainees' views regarding their study leaves and budget access. The survey results were made aware to the local board at the subsequent RAP Oversight Committee meeting to seek response and new guidance. There is a new system in place for study leave and study budgets, overseen by Health Education England. Overall, the survey attempted to understand and collate trainees' wants and needs, in effect improving trainee experiences.

### Developing a virtual mock casc for trainees

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doi: 10.1192/bjo.2021.440

**Aims.** The restrictions experienced due to the COVID-19 pandemic had impacts on how clinical teaching and assessment is conducted. The Royal College of Psychiatrists decided to run the final part of the membership exam, the Clinical Assessment of Skills and Competencies (CASC) online for the first time in September 2020. We aimed to prepare candidates in the Northern Ireland deanery for this by developing a virtual mock examination using the Zoom platform.

**Method.** In previous years, higher psychiatry trainees in the Northern Ireland deanery have run successful face to face mock examinations to help pre-membership trainees prepare for the CASC. We adapted some of this material to our virtual examination. 16 stations were run in total, in two circuits of eight. These stations were mapped to the Royal College CASC blueprint. Higher trainees were recruited to act as examiners, with core trainees acting as simulated patients. The mock examination was advertised through the local deanery and all candidates sitting in September availed of the opportunity (a total of 8 trainees).

Zoom was used as the platform due to ease of use, familiarity and breakout room function. Each station formed one breakout room, and a facilitator moved candidates between rooms and provided timing prompts. Instructions were emailed to candidates in advance.

A comfort break was provided between circuits. At the end of the mock examination, everyone was returned to the main room and examiners gave general feedback and tips. Individual feedback was provided by collating mark schemes for each candidate, which included free text feedback, and sending these via email.

**Result.** Despite the evident challenges involved, the mock CASC ran smoothly. There was one minor delay of approximately 3 minutes due to technical difficulties, which was easily recouped. We obtained qualitative feedback from candidates which was positive, with trainees commenting that they felt "more at ease ... less worried" about a digital exam, and that it was "efficient and effective".

All candidates who sat the mock examination were successful in the face to face CASC sitting which followed in September.

**Conclusion.** We were able to successfully adapt what was previously an in-person mock CASC exam to the new digital format in a way that reflected how the actual CASC exam will run, and it was considered beneficial preparation by the candidates who sat this mock. This has improved trainee experience at a time when many teaching opportunities have been suspended.

### The use of drama and theatre in enhancing communication skills of psychiatry trainees: a pilot study

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doi: 10.1192/bjo.2021.441

**Aims.** Various methods have been employed in the development of communication skills. This pilot study was designed to assess the acceptability, feasibility and cost-effectiveness of a specially designed workshop exploring the use of drama and theatre in enhancing the self-reported communication skills of psychiatry trainees. As a secondary aim, it assessed if the value of the improvements translated both into clinical practice and to training situations, including success in the Royal College of Psychiatrists (RCPsych) Clinical Assessment of Skills and Competencies (CASC) examination.

**Method.** A three-day drama and theatre workshop was organised in the West Midlands Deanery in conjunction with specialist instructors from performing arts at the Hearth Centre, Birmingham. The Tension State technique developed by Jacques Lecoq and Forum Theatre approach, were some of the methods employed to enable participants to develop the softer, but essential communication skills required for effective practice. Work was also undertaken focussing on self-regulation. Fourteen trainees completed the first day of the workshop. This pilot study utilised a mixed methodology to evaluate participants' views of the perceived impact of using drama and theatre to enhance their communication skills. Feedback was obtained from organisers and facilitators specifically relating to feasibility and cost effectiveness. Data were collected from participants using pre and post-workshop questionnaires and focus groups.

**Result.** All participants reported a positive and enjoyable experience, indicating that the approach was acceptable to those involved. The facilitators deemed this more novel approach to enhancing communication skills feasible, and cost effective and concluded that there was scope to incorporate it into routine psychiatry training in the area. It was however identified that the content of the workshop could be condensed, reducing the length therefore to two days. There was a notable increase in participants' self-reported confidence in their communication skills post compared to pre-workshop. Trainees reported utilising the techniques in day-to-day practice. All of those participants who undertook the CASC examination during the workshop were successful, although it would be too presumptive to assume a causative effect. The workshop was completed without any adverse events and there were no concerns from a safety perspective.

**Conclusion.** Drama and theatre, as a novel approach, appears to have noticeable benefits in enhancing the communication skills of psychiatry trainees. The success of this pilot study in demonstrating acceptability, feasibility and cost effectiveness, suggests that drama

and theatre techniques could be easily incorporated into psychiatry training and potentially other medical education programmes.

### Applying ethical dimensions in clinical dilemmas

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doi: 10.1192/bjo.2021.442

**Aims.** Central and North West London's Clinical Ethics Committee (CEC) offers a non-judgmental space to discuss ethical concerns and challenges and provide ethical guidance. This project aims to publicise these ethical dilemmas and guidance to inform decision making trust-wide.

**Background.** A Clinical Ethics Committee (CEC) encompasses a diverse range of figures, from psychiatrists and general practitioners to members of the clergy and experts by experience. The CEC in Central and North West London have been meeting regularly since 2003 to provide ethical assistance to a wide range of medical, surgical and psychiatric teams. Complex ethical cases are presented by the treating team, allowing a subsequent discussion of the ethical theories and frameworks within the case with the committee members. This synthesis of information can then assist the treating team in the shaping of ethical based solutions to their dilemmas.

The committee wished to encourage ethical based clinical thinking within the trust and enable others to learn from the valuable insights already provided by the CEC over the years.

**Method.** Case notes, recorded from the last 17 years of meetings of the Clinical Ethics Committee were reviewed. 98 cases were identified between 2003-2019. The contemporaneous case reports were then anonymised and indexed into one easy to use file. This file was published on the local intranet and publicised to staff.

**Result.** The cases were compiled into a PDF document which is available for all staff members within the trust on the intranet. This resource is open to all clinical staff, and serves the dual purpose of encouraging ethical-based thinking and also promoting the ethics committee to those who might be in need of assistance.

**Conclusion.** Clinical decisions can be complex and nuanced, often complicated by multiple viewpoints and ways of thinking. The database demonstrates the use of ethical dimensions by the ethics committee to inform decision making in a series of varied clinical and management dilemmas. The project required careful consideration around preservation of confidentiality as well as overcoming the logistical barriers of trust-wide dissemination. The result is a document that will allow ethical based decision-making to be embedded into everyday practice.

### Does attending psychiatry teaching lectures change attitude of medical students towards people with mental illness? A longitudinal survey from nepal

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doi: 10.1192/bjo.2021.443

**Aims.** The study aims to compare the attitude of early clinical year medical students towards people with mental illness at the

beginning and the end of their psychiatry teaching schedule. It hypothesizes that long exposure to psychiatry lectures can help to reduce the negative attitude.

**Background.** Health professionals are also known to harbour negative attitude towards people with mental illness. Reducing stigma among medical students is crucial to shape the attitude of future health professionals towards people with mental illness. However, the effect of Psychiatry training on the attitude of the medical students shows mixed results.

**Method.** It was a prospective longitudinal study conducted among fourth year medical students affiliated with a teaching hospital in Southern Nepal as an initiative to improve quality of Psychiatry training for medical students. The students who gave their consent for participation were assessed for their attitude at the beginning, after the first two introductory lectures and at the end of the Psychiatry lecture-based teaching schedule (36 two weekly lectures in 5 month period), using self-administered 16-item Mental Illness Clinician's Attitudes Scale (MICA-2) 'medical students version' questionnaire in English language. Permission was taken from the author of the study to use the scale. IRB approval was taken prior to the study.

**Result.** A total of 95 (approx. 67%) students participated in the study. At the first follow-up i.e. second week, (n = 85), there was no significant difference in negative attitude as assessed by MICA score (p = 0.47). However, at six months follow-up (n = 82), the negative attitude significantly differed compared to the baseline (p < 0.001).

**Conclusion.** While brief lectures about mental illness can provide some knowledge about mental illness, long term exposure to psychiatry lectures can reduce attitude of medical students on people with mental illness. Hence, it is also crucial to incorporate academic contents that reduce negative attitude about people with mental illness.

Financial declaration: The study was self-funded by the department of Psychiatry at National Medical College and Teaching Hospital, Parsa, Nepal.

### Attitude and knowledge about electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) among medical students in Nepal: a pilot survey

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doi: 10.1192/bjo.2021.444

**Aims.** Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT) is an important modality of treatment for treatment resistant psychiatric disorders. Young medical students like general public might harbor several misconceptions about ECT. In this pilot survey, we explored the knowledge and attitude about ECT amongst young medical students training in a medical college affiliated to a teaching hospital in Southern Nepal.

**Method.** A 23-item questionnaire in English language with either 'True' or 'False' response as outcome was developed by reviewing findings from previous studies. Brief information was also taken to record familiarity of medical students with ECT as a treatment procedure. The study was conducted as a departmental pilot survey for quality improvement of Psychiatry Undergraduate Training. A total of 128 medical students in early clinical year enrolled in MBBS curriculum at a teaching hospital in Southern Nepal participated in the survey. The students were not exposed