

Exploring the Role of Virtual Simulation Gaming in Reducing Physical Examination Anxiety for Undergraduate Nurses

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Abstract

Simulated objective structured clinical examination (OSCE) assessments have traditionally evoked high levels of anxiety for students, both when learning the scenarios in face-to-face simulations and when undertaking the actual OSCE assessment. Virtual simulation gaming (VSG) is an identified method of preparation for simulation that may reduce performance anxiety for students undertaking OSCE assessment. This quantitative exploratory research utilised established satisfaction and anxiety/confidence scales to explore the impact of VSG on student perceptions of simulation experiences, anxiety and self-confidence in clinical decision-making. Summative OSCE assessments were conducted in two cohorts before an inpatient and ambulatory care clinical practicum. Cohort one undertook their summative OSCE assessment immediately following the initial teaching, with the second cohort completing a mental health and addictions clinical practicum before their summative OSCE. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to examine the relationships between simulation satisfaction, students' perceived anxiety, and confidence with clinical decision-making. Self-reported satisfaction with simulation levels were high and improved over subsequent simulations. Results showed that although the second cohort demonstrated higher levels of confidence in clinical decision-making, there was no significant difference in anxiety levels between the two cohorts.

Keywords: Simulation-based learning, nursing education, virtual simulation gaming, clinical decision-making, clinical practicum

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