

Reflection: Long Case Practice

Description

During my clinical placement at Kempsey District Hospital, I undertook a series of long case assessments under the supervision of Dr Dean Letchford, Director of Medicine. These sessions involved conducting independent, unobserved patient assessments followed by formal case presentations. Over several weeks, Dr Letchford provided structured, honest feedback that challenged me to critically evaluate and continually improve my approach to patient care.

Feelings

At the outset, I felt daunted by the responsibility of independently interviewing and assessing my patient within the time constraints of a long case. I was particularly concerned about amalgamating all the patients information and formulating a care plan as this would significantly push the confidence I have in my medical ability's. However, I gained confidence through repetition, support, and the encouragement to stretch beyond my perceived limitations.

Evaluation

This experience significantly contributed to my development as a clinician. It strengthened my ability to conduct focused yet comprehensive histories and physical examinations, apply diagnostic reasoning, and formulate appropriate management plans. Dr Letchford's detailed feedback was instrumental in refining my case presentation skills, an area I came to appreciate as central not only to examinations, but to clinical handovers, ward rounds, and future specialty training.

Analysis

Long case practice offered a unique opportunity to consolidate the broad knowledge and skills acquired over the last four and a half years. It emphasised the importance of integrating communication, clinical reasoning, and patient-centred thinking in real-world scenarios. Working through increasingly complex and acute cases deepened my understanding of the nuanced decision-making that will be required of me as I enter internship. I also learned to value constructive criticism and saw how targeted feedback can accelerate growth and professional maturity.

Conclusion

This experience was pivotal in preparing me for the transition to internship. It taught me to think independently, communicate effectively, and engage meaningfully with patients, core competencies for a junior doctor. It also reinforced my commitment to continued growth through reflective practice and feedback.

Action Plan.

I aim to complete two long case presentations during each of my remaining rotations before graduation in December. Once internship commences, I will conduct at least two focused long cases each month in orthopaedics or plastics, following relevant surgical college protocols ensuring I review each case with my supervisor to strengthen my clinical reasoning and presentation skills for future surgical training applications.