The use of simulation and clinical skills facilities for the assessment of foundation doctors and doctors in the first and second year of specialty training

This page is aimed at people who work in medical education and training. It gives information about the use of simulation and clinical skills facilities to assess doctors in training in the Foundation Programme and in the first and second years of specialty training.

How was the use of simulation and clinical skills facilities in assessment identified?

During our regional visit to the Royal Preston Hospital, Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust in 2013, we saw that simulation and clinical skills facilities were being used to assess foundation doctors and doctors in the first and second year of specialty training. We felt that this initiative was worth sharing.

What measures have been introduced?

The trust runs skills assessments as part of the induction process. Doctors in training up to grade ST2, including junior level clinical fellows, must participate in clinical assessment circuits. The circuits are designed to establish competency of core clinical skills and to give assurance for safe practice within the patient care environment.

The assessment programme represents a range of common tasks that doctors in training will need to carry out in their future careers. They include:

- safe prescribing
- basic and paediatric life support
- defibrillation
- 12 lead electrocardiogram
- taking blood samples
connecting intravenous fluids.

If a doctor in training fails to demonstrate the required competences they are given remedial training before they begin any out of hours or on call shifts.

**Detailed information**

**Support for supervisors**
During our visit, the foundation supervisors were very happy with these skill assessments on new foundation doctors in training - it allows them to recognise any who need further support in certain areas.

**Preparedness for doctors in training**
Historical evaluation of the circuits shows that doctors in training who use them consistently give good feedback. They describe the assessments as a supportive and reassuring process that makes them feel confident and capable when starting their posts.

**Assurance of patient safety**
There is a trust-wide cultural acceptance of these assessments as an efficient way to improve skills and assure patient safety. The assessments enhance patient safety as it makes sure that the doctors in training are competent or given support to meet the expectations of the trust.

**I want to learn more**
For further information, contact Maggie Wilson at maggie.wilson@lthtr.nhs.uk.