

Characteristics of student led clinics in the allied health professions: Protocol for a Scoping Review.

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Characteristics of student led clinics in the allied health professions: Protocol for a Scoping Review.

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Abstract

Background: Student led clinics can provide students from allied health professions with the opportunity to gain valuable placement experience as an integral component of their pre-registration programme enabling them to develop their competencies and professional skills and also their administrative and leadership skills. Student led clinics have the capacity to help meet the demand for appropriate practice based learning opportunities as there is an expectation that all allied health professions students should have high quality practice based learning experiences to ensure the workforce is fit for the future. Developing an overview of the studies relating to student led clinics will help to provide insight and understanding in relation to the key characteristics of student led clinics.

Objective: The objective is to understand the extent and type of evidence in relation to the characteristics of student led clinics. This scoping review will identify the following: (1) What student-led clinics exist in the allied health professions and (2) what are their characteristics?

Methods: The scoping review will consider studies and publications that include student led clinics as an integral part of the pre-registration curriculum for allied health professions students such as occupational therapy and physiotherapy. Databases to be searched are PubMed, MEDLINE, CINAHL, ERIC, Science Direct, PsycArticles, PsycINFO, TRIP database, and ProQuest Nursing and Allied Health Database, ProQuest One Academic, The Cochrane Library and JBI EBP database. The search strategy, including all the identified keywords and index terms, will be modified for each included database and/or information source. The reference lists of all the included evidence sources will be screened for any relevant additional studies. Potentially relevant sources will be retrieved and imported into the Covidence screening and data extraction tool. Studies published in English will be included and date limiters will not be used.

Results: Data will be extracted from the studies and charted using the TIDieR checklist and this will be conducted in line with the objectives of the scoping review.

Conclusions: This scoping will provide key information about the characteristics of student led clinics such as type and location, duration, aims, type of allied health students, and development activities of the student led clinic. The findings of the scoping review will be of interest to pre-registration education programmes within the allied health professions who have an interest in exploring opportunities to address placement capacity issues. Clinical Trial: Open Science Framework DOI 10.17605/OSF.IO/RGAQX; <https://osf.io/rgaqx/>

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Original Manuscript

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Trial Registration:

Open Science Framework DOI 10.17605/OSF.IO/RGAQX; <https://osf.io/rgaqx/>

Keywords

Student led clinic; student run clinic; student facilitated clinic; allied health; allied health profession; interprofessional; higher education, university; tertiary education; pre-registration.

Introduction**Background**

Meeting demand for practice based learning opportunities within the context of a changing health and social care environment is challenging [1]. The COVID-19 global pandemic emphasised the on-going crisis in meeting the demand for appropriate practice based learning opportunities in occupational therapy which is reflected across the allied health professions. The World Federation of Occupational Therapists has tasked higher education institutions with exploring new and innovative solutions to ensure that students develop the skills required to be fit for future practice [2]. Strategies, such as exploring different approaches to the traditional models of practice based learning, could help to address practice based learning capacity issues [3].

There is an expectation that all allied health professions students should have high quality practice based learning opportunities to ensure that the workforce is fit for the future, able to develop effective partnerships and have the skills to be able to flourish within a changing health and social care environment [4]. In the UK, the Health and Care Professions Council standards for pre-registration education require practice based learning to be an integral part of allied health programmes and outline the responsibility of education providers to ensure the quality of practice based learning [5]. The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, in collaboration with the Royal College of Occupational Therapists, developed a set of principles relating to practice based learning. These principles highlight the requirement for students to engage in a diverse range of practice based learning opportunities in order to reflect current health care provision, support the development of the professions and shape the workforce of the future [6].

Student Led Clinics

Student Led Clinics, are a form of practice based learning where students take responsibility for the organisation and delivery of services under the supervision of staff [7]. They offer an innovative way of meeting demand in relation to providing opportunities for practice based learning for allied health students, such as occupational therapy students. Student-Led Clinics are increasing as part of pre-registration programmes, and provide experiential learning opportunities with a focus on clear goals and community services [8]. Student led clinics present a valuable opportunity for students to participate in healthcare delivery [9]. The reasons for establishing student led clinics internationally vary but their focus could be on the support of underserved populations while addressing the challenges of meeting the demands of increasing student numbers and practice based learning capacity issues [10]. Physiotherapy student-led clinics have demonstrated that they provide valuable educational opportunities for students whilst also providing cost-effective services to the public [11]. Student Led Clinics can also provide valuable opportunities for interprofessional collaboration as they can be used to facilitate interprofessional learning experiences within a practice context [3]. In student led clinics students have the opportunity to develop their competencies and professional skills, and administrative and leadership skills while also being able to take a lead role in the organisation of the service being delivered under the supervision of a qualified health professional [7, 12-14]. Other benefits of student led clinics include the opportunity to interact with service users, working with students from other professions, learning about the role of other professions and the development of clinical skills [7, 15]. In addition, student led clinics can enable students to develop their ability to demonstrate compassion and empathy for underserved populations and an opportunity to engage in experiences that may not normally be available as part of their education [9, 16]. Reported benefits of student led clinics include increased time for assessment and treatment, more holistic and integrated care and increased access to services [17]. By contrast, the potential barriers to student led clinics include sustainability from resource, time and cost perspectives [7]. Other issues to be considered relate to the physical environment such as space available and time commitments for practice educators [16]. This suggests there are several factors to consider in the development of a student led clinic such as its objectives, core features such as the patient population, the interprofessional care team, establishing community partnerships and the use of technology [7, 18]. Other factors to consider in the development of a student led clinic are the structure of the clinic, its place within the curriculum [7] as well as engaging in a process of consultation with university stakeholders to explore the feasibility and accessibility of establishing a student led clinic [19]. How the development of clinical skills would be measured, the training of educators and evaluation of outcomes for service users [7] would also be factors to consider in the

development of a student led clinic within an educational context.

There is however limited research available in relation to the characteristics and sustainability of student led clinics to guide their development in order to create effective educational opportunities for allied health students. As research related to student led clinics is in its infancy [7] this review seeks to explore the characteristics of Student-Led Clinics within the allied health professions in order to map and chart the existing evidence base, identify main concepts and identify gaps in knowledge in this research area [20] This will provide an in-depth understanding of the characteristics of student led clinics within allied health professions as the review will provide information relating to characteristics such as types of clinics and students involved, aims of student led clinics, populations served and the place of the clinic within the curriculum [7]. This is with the aim of developing an effective solution to practice based learning capacity issues as well as to inform future research. Exploring the existing evidence base in this area enables the development of student led clinics to be based on current evidence and for valuable insight to be gained in relation to the purpose and characteristics of student led clinics.

Review Questions

This review will specifically chart data to address the following questions: (1) What student-led clinics exist in the allied health professions and (2) what are their characteristics?

Methods

Study Design

This review will be conducted in accordance with the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) methodology for scoping reviews to ensure a systematic methodology that can be replicated [21]. This scoping review is registered on the Open Science Framework [22] and will be reported in line with the PRISMA Extension for scoping reviews [20].

Eligibility Criteria

Participants

This review will focus on pre-registration students from allied health professions. Pre-registration allied health programmes are approved educational programmes that lead to eligibility to apply for registration with a regulatory body such as the Health and Care Professions Council within the UK. A pre-registration programme can be defined as a pathway into a profession [23]. The allied health professions included will be the fifteen professions currently regulated by the Health and Care Professions Council in the UK. These include, arts therapists, biomedical scientists, podiatrists/chiropractors, clinical scientists, dietitians, hearing aid dispensers, occupational therapists, operating department practitioners, orthoptists, paramedics,

physiotherapists, practitioner psychologists, prosthetists/orthotists, radiographers and speech and language therapists [5].

Studies will be excluded if they focus on nursing, pharmacy, dentistry or medical students as they would not directly address the review question which focuses on student led clinics within allied health professions.

Concept

The concept being mapped within this scoping review will be the characteristics of Student Led Clinics, where students take responsibility for the organisation and delivery of services under the supervision of staff [7]. This review will consider studies relating to student led clinics with any type of service users and will not focus on a particular condition, diagnosis or service user group. The drivers of student led clinics can be to facilitate student skill development, provision of clinical placement hours and social enterprise and altruism [7] any student led clinics that have been established with these or similar aims will be included in the review. Specific areas of interest are the characteristics of student led clinics such as type and location, duration, aims, type of allied health students, and development activities of the student led clinic. Studies will be included that focus on a range of methods of delivery of student led clinics, such as face to face, online or hybrid delivery. As Student Led Clinics should be led by students [24] studies will be excluded where clinics are run by educators/practitioners as these would potentially not provide insight into students in a leadership role. Studies will also be excluded whose primary focus is on aspects of student led clinics such as evaluating student and service user outcomes, cost effectiveness and satisfaction with service provision. Although these areas have been highlighted as being relevant for future research into Student Led Clinics [7] they are beyond the scope of this review. The template for intervention description and replication (TIDierR) will be used to extract relevant information from studies in order to present an accepted and methodical description of the characteristics of student led clinics [25]

Context

The scoping review will consider studies that specifically focus on clinics, regardless of geographical location, that are led by allied health students within a higher education context. This is so that the student led clinics included in the review will provide a learning experience for students as well as providing services [26]. The review will include studies that focus on student led clinics that are an integral part of the pre-registration curriculum [27]. Studies that focus on student led clinics within a university context that are a formal part of the education of health professionals [9] will be considered within this scoping review, this will include studies that use student led clinics at different stages within the curriculum [7] Student led clinics that take place in environments outside of an educational setting (community and hospital settings) will be considered for inclusion as long as they are an integral part of the pre-registration curriculum.

Types of Sources

This scoping review will consider quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods study designs for inclusion. Text and opinion papers will also be considered for inclusion in this scoping review. In addition, analytical observational studies including prospective and retrospective cohort studies, case-control studies and

analytical cross-sectional studies will be considered for inclusion. This review will also consider descriptive observational study designs including case series, individual case reports and descriptive cross-sectional studies for inclusion. Qualitative studies will also be considered that focus on qualitative data including, but not limited to, designs such as phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, qualitative description, action research and feminist research. In addition, reference lists of systematic reviews will be considered in order to identify potential studies.

Review Team

The review is being conducted by a team comprised of experienced academics with an interest in occupational therapy practice based learning (SR, KB and KT).

Patient and Public Involvement

This scoping review protocol includes the involvement of KB who is a practice educator and academic.

Search Strategy

The search strategy aims to locate both published and unpublished studies. An initial limited search of MEDLINE, CINAHL, Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, PROSPERO, and JBI Evidence Synthesis was conducted. There are three systematic reviews, a rapid evidence assessment and a rapid review registered with PROSPERO with a focus on student led clinics. The systematic review protocols identified focused on different aspects of student led clinics such as health interventions for adults with or at risk of chronic disease [28], patient, client, consumer and student outcomes of participating in a student led clinic [29] and colorectal cancer screening in free clinics [30]. The rapid evidence assessment focuses on the assessment of student assisted assessment and brief intervention clinics to address gaps in remote and rural healthcare [31]. The rapid review focuses on the impact and scope of student led clinics but with a focus on rehabilitation science and student and service user outcomes [32]. In addition, a scoping review has been published in the last three years on the characteristics of student-led groups and clinics but this relates specifically to physical rehabilitation [7]. As the primary focus of this proposed scoping review will be on the characteristics of student led clinics such as the type and location, duration, aims, type of allied health students, and development activities of any student led clinic it is not anticipated that these reviews will result in duplication as they either have a specific focus on student and service user outcomes, a particular condition, an aspect of rehabilitation or an area of practice (remote and rural).

Following the initial limited search, the text words contained in the titles and abstracts of relevant articles, and the index terms used to describe the articles were used to develop a full search strategy for PubMed, MEDLINE, CINAHL, ERIC, Science Direct, PsycArticles, PsycINFO, TRIP database, and ProQuest Nursing and Allied Health Database, ProQuest One Academic, The Cochrane Library and JBI EBP database (see Appendix 1). The search strategy which will include all the identified keywords and index terms, will be modified for each included database and/or information source. The reference list of all the included evidence sources will be screened for any relevant additional studies. Studies published in English will be included, as the resources for translation are not available, date limiters will not be used.

Study or Source of Evidence selection

Following the search, all identified citations will be collated and uploaded into a bibliographic software or citation management system and duplicates removed (REF Works). Potentially relevant sources will be retrieved and imported into the Covidence screening and data extraction tool. Following a pilot test, titles and abstracts will then be screened by two or more independent reviewers (SR and KB) for assessment against the inclusion criteria for the review. The full text of selected citations will be assessed in detail against the inclusion criteria by two independent reviewers (SR and KB). Reasons for exclusion of sources of evidence at full text that do not meet the inclusion criteria will be recorded and reported in the scoping review. Any disagreements that arise between the reviewers at each stage of the selection process will be resolved through discussion, or with an additional reviewer (KT). The results of the search and the study inclusion process will be reported in full in the final scoping review and presented in a Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-analyses extension for scoping review (PRISMA-ScR) flow diagram [20].

Data Extraction

Data will be extracted from papers included in the scoping review by two independent reviewers using a data extraction tool based on the TIDieR Checklist [25]. The data extracted will include specific details about the participants, concept, context, study methods and key findings relevant to the review question.

A draft extraction form is provided (see Appendix 2) that will be piloted and then modified and revised as necessary. There will be two reviewers one extracting and one checking (SR and KB) initially both reviewers will independently review a selection of studies for consistency in relation to what is being extracted. Any disagreements that arise between the reviewers will be resolved through discussion, or with an additional reviewer/s. If appropriate, authors of papers will be contacted to request missing or additional data, as required. A logical and descriptive summary of the results that align to the questions of the review will be presented.

Ethical Considerations

As the methodology of the scoping review consists of reviewing and collecting data from publicly accessible material ethical approval is not required.

Results

Data will be extracted from the studies and charted in tabular format, including figures and graphs using the TIDieR checklist [25]. A narrative summary will be provided to accompany the results and a description will be provided about how the results relate to the scoping review's research questions.

Discussion

The scoping review will provide an outline of the current body of research relating to the characteristics of student led clinics in the allied health professions that are an integral part of a pre-registration curriculum. This scoping review will provide comprehensive information relating to the characteristics of student led clinics across a range of allied health professions including occupational therapy and physiotherapy and will make an important contribution to gaining a better understanding of how student led clinics operate within pre-registration programmes. This understanding of student led clinics will contribute to the development of student led clinics, gaining an insight into their value in addressing placement capacity issues, identifying gaps in knowledge in this research area and areas of future research.

It is important to highlight that there are some limitations in relation to conducting the proposed scoping review. While a comprehensive search strategy has been developed there is a risk that some data that could have provided additional insights in relation to the characteristic of student led clinics has been omitted, this risk is enhanced by the process of searching gray literature and reference lists of included studies. As the aim of scoping review is to identify and map evidence in a particular area [33] the studies included in the scoping review will not be critically appraised but will be used to develop insight and understanding in relation to characteristics of student led clinics, the reviewers therefore will be unable to comment on the quality of the studies which are included in the scoping review. In addition, the search strategy focuses on studies that have been published in English therefore some studies that would have been appropriate for inclusion but published in other languages could have been omitted from the scoping review.

The findings of the proposed scoping review will be of particular interest to pre-registration education programmes within the allied health professions who have a focus on addressing placement capacity issues.

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank Julie Smith, Academic Librarian, Sir Alex Ferguson Library, Glasgow Caledonian University for her contributions to the development of this scoping review protocol.

Data Availability

All data which is relevant to the study is included within the article or uploaded as supplementary information.

Authors' Contributions

The design of the protocol and the drafting of the manuscript was conducted by SR, KT and KB.

Conflicts of Interest

None declared.

Multimedia Appendix 1

Search Strategy

Multimedia Appendix 2

Data extraction instrument (TIDieR) [25]



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Abbreviations

JBI: Joanna Briggs Institute

PRISMA-ScR: Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analyses Extension for Scoping Reviews

TIDieR: template for intervention description and replication

Supplementary Files

Multimedia Appendixes

Search Strategy.

URL: <http://asset.jmir.pub/assets/15e0a94364a374fd21745b7d3bb2fcf5.docx>

Data Extraction.

URL: <http://asset.jmir.pub/assets/54efdb55d77ad0dd5fc9ad6c7266abb7.docx>