

Embedding responsible conduct in learning and research into the pharmacology curriculum

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Introduction. Responsible conduct in learning and research (RCLR) has now been included in the Science Pharmacology curriculum. In second year, a single lecture introduces students to issues such as the use of animals in teaching and responsible conduct of research. Third year student groups deliver presentations on topics including scientific integrity and the use of human subjects in research. Academic and research staff are invited to attend these presentations, provide feedback and participate in discussions. Honours students complete an online course on the responsible conduct of research and participate in an interactive movie. A survey of perceptions among these students and staff was recently conducted.

Aim. To evaluate responsible conduct in learning and research within the Science Pharmacology curriculum. Students and staff were asked to provide feedback and suggestions for improvement.

Methods. Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the Human Research Ethics Committee, University of Western Australia. Anonymous and confidential surveys were delivered online or on paper as appropriate. Data were expressed as Approval (% of responses represented by Strongly Agree and Agree).

Results. This survey's results indicated that RCLR was relevant to the study of Pharmacology (69-100% Approval), important for one's future career (62-100% Approval) and had stimulated further interest in this area (32-83% Approval). Free entry comments demonstrated the value of including RCLR in the curriculum. These comments included "I found the animal testing section very interesting, and it made me critically re-evaluate my limited views on the subject" and "The interactive video was engaging and provided insight into how a misconduct case may play out in real life". Suggestions for improvement included having guest speakers, an Australian focus and greater staff participation.

Discussion. Students and staff found the inclusion of RCLR in the Science Pharmacology curriculum to be valuable.