**WHOA! A new reflective model for thinking through professionalism dilemmas**

**Aim**
To evaluate the usefulness of the WHOA! model to medical students.

**Methodology**
An interactive workshop was developed in which medical students (n=18) used the WHOA! model to discuss a number of professionalism dilemmas based on real life situations encountered by medical students. Students then rated the model's usefulness.

**Background**
90% of medical students encounter a professional dilemma during their clinical placements, with some occurring as soon as they enter the clinical environment.

The WHOA! model of reflection was designed by staff and students as a simple, easy to remember structure to help medical students think through tricky situations.

The model encourages students to reflect on their professional behaviour and that of others. It encourages students to seek help where needed, identify what barriers might prevent them from doing the right thing, and take action if needed for the benefit of patients.

**The WHOA! model of reflection**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>W</th>
<th>Help!</th>
<th>Obstacles?</th>
<th>Action!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What?</strong></td>
<td>Do I need help with this? Who can I turn to?</td>
<td>What might prevent me from speaking up/acting?</td>
<td>What can I do next? What is the right thing to do?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Results**
Overall, 77% of students said they would use the model in clinical training, and average rating of usefulness was high.

| ‘The WHOA! model is a useful way of structuring my thinking’ | Average rating: 8.3 – very useful |
| ‘The WHOA! model made me more confident in dealing with professional dilemmas’ | Average rating: 6.5 – more confident |
| ‘The WHOA! model helped me to decide what action to take’ | Average rating: 6.1 – somewhat helped |
| ‘I would use The WHOA! model’ | Average rating: 7.25 – would very likely use model |

**Discussion**
The WHOA! model provides a useful structure for students to think through professional dilemmas. Optimal usefulness in clinical practice is likely to occur when students also seek out professional guidance from General Medical Council documents as to how to act in different situations.

**References:**
2. GMC (2011) The state of the medical education in the UK GMC

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