

# **Towards student-centred learning and teaching - reflections on the new Unit of Study “Fundamentals of Complementary Medicines” for physiotherapy students**

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## **AIM**

The Faculty of Pharmacy and the Discipline of Physiotherapy, Faculty of Health Sciences collaborated to offer an elective Fundamentals of Complementary Medicines Unit of Study to the Bachelor of Applied Sciences (Physiotherapy) students in Semester 2, 2008. The aim of the unit is for students to gain fundamental knowledge and literature evaluation skills in evidence based complementary medicines.

## **METHOD**

In designing the course the students' backgrounds are taken into consideration and integrative and evidence-based medicine are used as guidelines. The content focused on the use of herbal medicines in musculoskeletal conditions and pain management. The teaching and learning activities to promote student centre learning are: group project work, student presentation, staff feedback on assignments, peer feedback, interactive activities such as quizzes and questionnaires to assess the individual body type; and demonstration of herbal materials.

## **OUTCOMES**

There was active participation of the students in the lectures and presentations. Students demonstrated effective understanding and skills in the literature evaluation of herbal medicines. Students' feedback was used for planning the second year's teaching. Researching effective clinical usage of herbal medicines and other applications in physiotherapy practice constituted greater challenges than the students' previous experiences in this area. Reflecting on this and analysing the evaluation responses from last year has successfully enabled us to develop increasing alignment of assessments with the clinical expectations of the students. The design and development of this new unit of study has illustrated the benefits of student-centred learning and teaching, considering students' needs and backgrounds, student participation and student feedback.