

Introducing a series of primary care focused clinical skills practicals to prepare students for rotations and work-placements

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A set of new primary care focused practicals were introduced for 4th year students in the Clinical Skills Laboratory. The aims were to focus on procedures that students will routinely undertake during work-placements and clinical rotations and to build upon the core skills taught in the preceding year.

The procedures were selected from suggestions made by employers, graduates and students and included:

- Otoscopic examination
- Ophthalmic examination including direct ophthalmoscopy, Schirmer tear test and application of eye drops
- Dermatology: skin scrape, tape strip and Diff Quick stain of slides
- Dentistry: ultrasonic scaling, dental charts and making a basic dental model
- Intermediate level suturing techniques: cruciate, intradermal and Aberdeen knot
- Small animal neutering: bitch spay and cat castration techniques

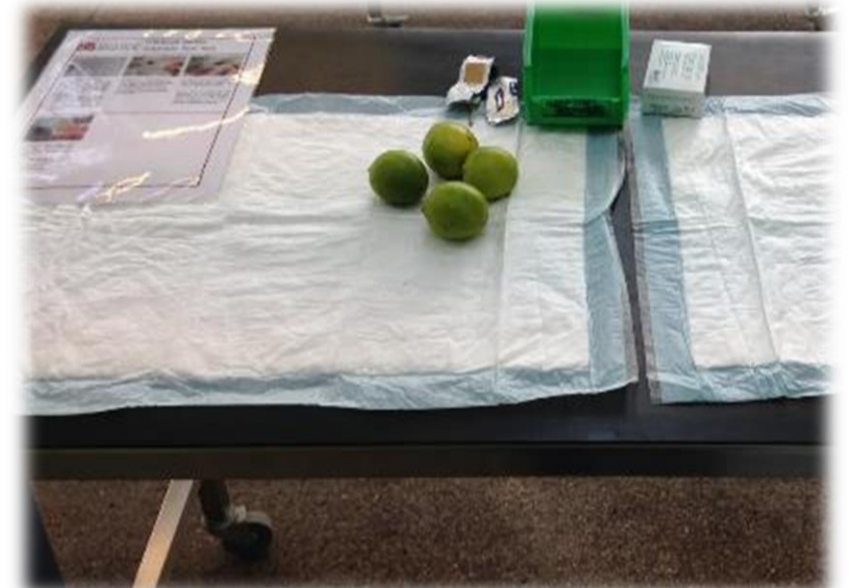
A range of models and instruction booklets were developed including:



An ocular model from Bristol Medical Pro Limited.



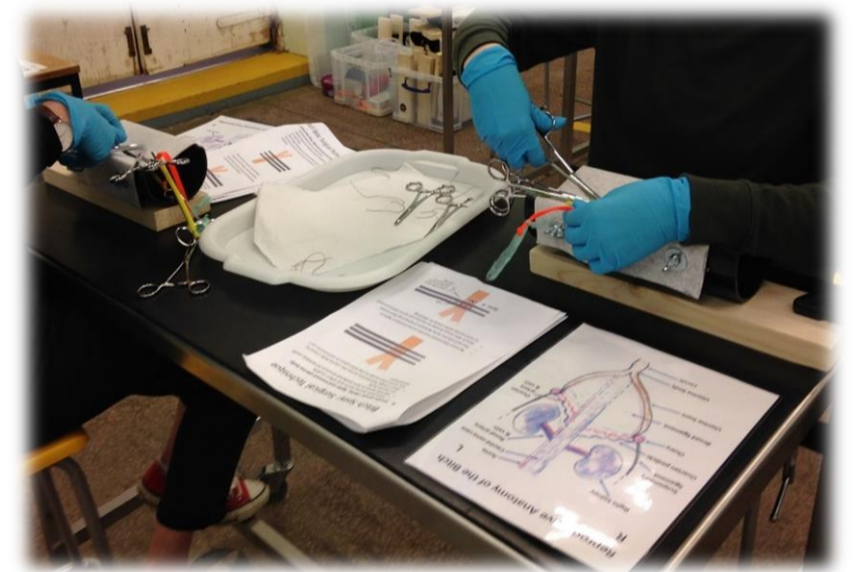
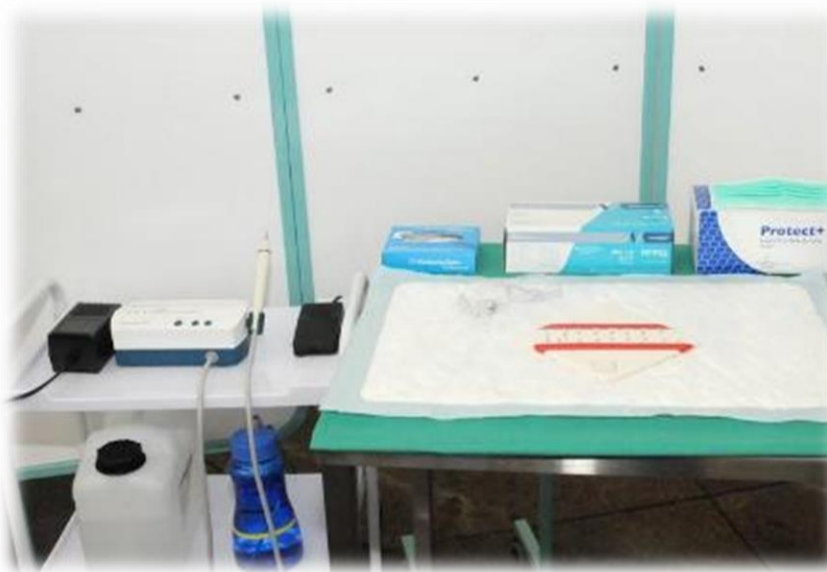
An ear made from Tubigrip and plastic piping.



An eyelid cut into a lime, that simulated tear flow.



The dental scaling model was based on Lumbis et al.¹ with input from the School of Oral and Dental Sciences, University of Bristol.



A bitch spay model made from plastic piping and balloons.

In each practical, groups of 30 students visited stations during a 90 minute period. Feedback was gathered using Post-it® notes. Student comments were overwhelmingly positive with the sessions being considered 'enjoyable' and 'helpful'. The value of using models prior to exposure to live animals was highlighted, while spending time making the basic dental model was seen as 'therapeutic'. Some students requested more time, particularly for suturing. Future development of the clinical skills practicals will include modifying the set-up of some practicals to maximise the time available for teaching.

References:

¹ Lumbis, R; Gregory, S; Baillie, S. Evaluation of a dental model for training veterinary students. *Journal of Veterinary Medical Education*, Vol. 39, No. 2, 2012, p. 128-135.