

PROTOCOL FOR DEVELOPING CLINICAL SKILLS BY EXAMINING EACH OTHER

When practising on a fellow student, students are essentially screening healthy individuals for the presence or absence of an abnormality. There is a small but real chance that students could pick up something pathological e.g. a previously unrecognised heart murmur or a lump. It may be in their colleague's interest to know this - for example, they may have unknown mild congenital valve disease which is worth diagnosing as they will need prophylactic antibiotics for operative cover. However, students could create a false sense of anxiety by thinking there is something wrong when there isn't (a false positive test result).

To alleviate any possible problems, students should use the following protocol.

Students may also find themselves examining friends and relatives – we think the same approach should apply.

Do not practice any examination before it has been properly demonstrated and students have practiced it under supervision. Students should not carry out any invasive examinations.

Before examining someone, students should **ASK IF THEY WOULD LIKE TO BE TOLD IF THE STUDENT FINDS ANYTHING WRONG.**

IF THEY SAY NO, then students should not examine them (or at least not that system) and then there will be no problem. Otherwise students may have the emotional burden of thinking there is something wrong with their friend (even if there isn't) but not being able to tell them.

IF THEY SAY YES, then this is fine as they have consented to be screened and students should let them know if they do think there is something wrong. Given the student's lack of clinical experience, it is quite possible that any abnormality found is not serious or simply not abnormal e.g. temporary flow murmur. If students do find something wrong, we recommend, if possible, they get another student to confirm the findings. If this is confirmed - then the friend should go to their own GP to have it checked out in case this is something substantial that needs further investigation.

You should ensure you have appropriate medical indemnity through joining a medical defence organisations such as the MDU (medical defence union) or MPS (medical protection society).