

Healthy education all round

August 13 2014



Student Coco-Nicole Nelson (with her teeth stained pink to show up plaque) demonstrates the benefits of teeth-cleaning with medical student Matt Plaquette.

So, just what is a teddy bear's blood pressure?

While the answer to that particular question remains unclear, a community engagement program that saw 11 Flinders [medical students](#) visit an Unley primary school proved to be highly educational for both sets of [students](#).

The third-year medical students visited Kirinari Community School in a

community engagement project conceived as part of the "Health, Profession and Society" topic, which aims to give student doctors an idea of their obligations and responsibilities within their communities.

Using teddy bears or soft toys as their own child "patients", groups of children aged from 5 to 12 progressed through a series of stations at which they undertook an interactive role play with the medical students. Each stop provided information and education on topics that included hand and food hygiene, basic musculo-skeletal anatomy, healthy eating and food choices, measuring vital signs, and sun safety.

A paramedic from SA Ambulance also attended with an ambulance vehicle to assist in explaining medical emergencies and procedures.

Medical student Andrew Hunter said the exercise not only gave the children useful health knowledge, but also helped in familiarising them with doctors and their roles.

"Children can sometimes feel a bit apprehensive about a visit to the doctor, and this gave them some insights into what doctors do and, I think, helped them feel much more comfortable," Mr Hunter said.

"And while we do study paediatrics and meet kids on the wards, getting a better understanding of dealing with children of different ages is a really useful thing for us to do too."

Health, Profession and Society topic co-ordinator Dr David Hunter said the program is intended to get students to think about their local communities and how they can give something back.

"It is student-driven in that the students develop and propose the projects themselves, and we are very proud that our students have chosen to take on such a wide array of valuable projects," Dr Hunter said.

"They range from health screening, information talks and radio shows as well as this excellent project to engage and demystify healthcare for young children."

Provided by Flinders University

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