

Title: Physiotherapy Students Experiences of Undressing in Practical Sessions: a Qualitative Study

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Purpose:

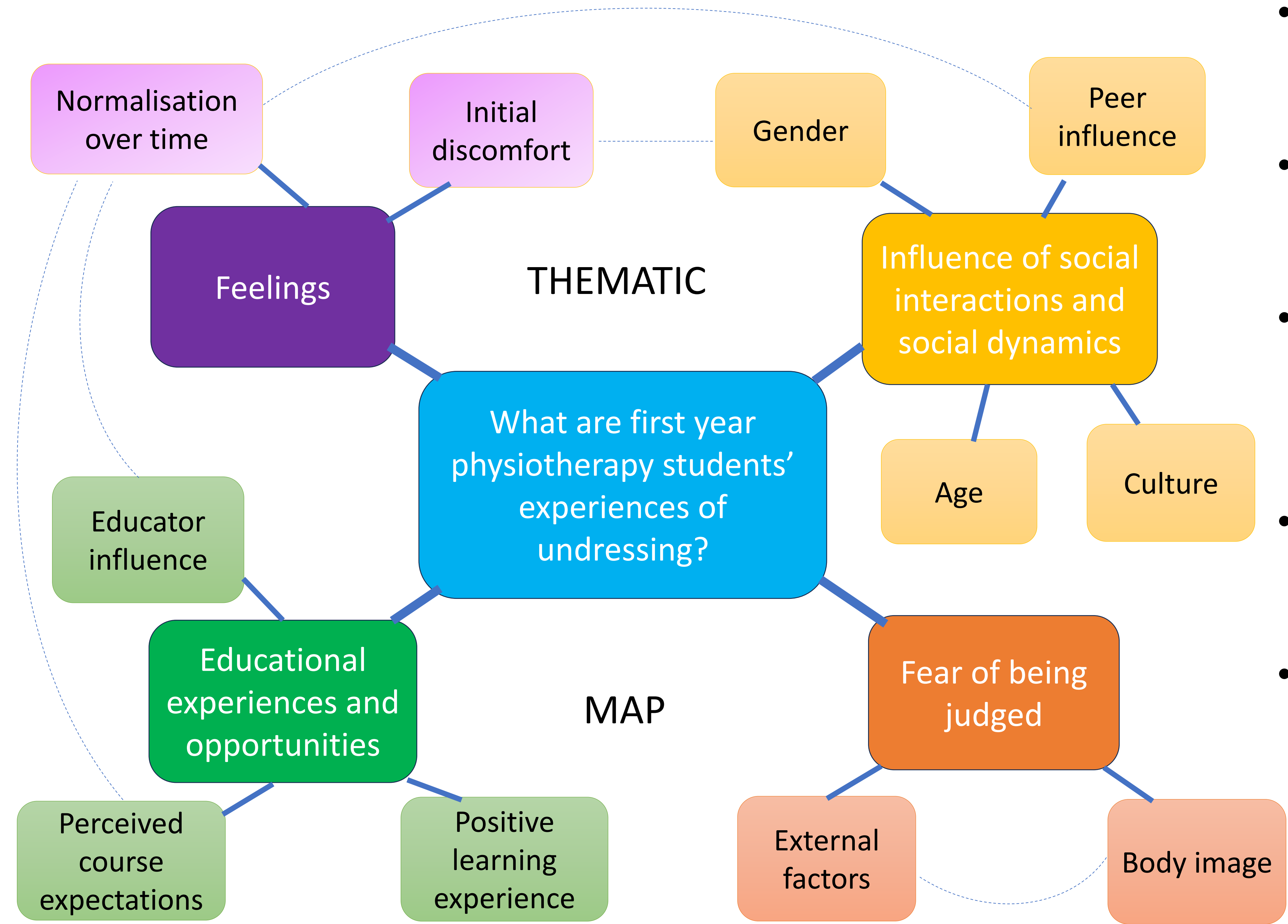
- Practical sessions are central to physiotherapy education, with peer physical examination (PPE) involving partial undressing to learn anatomy and skills.
- Undressing in wider healthcare education is reported to provoke discomfort influenced by **gender, body image, culture, and religion**.
- This study explores **first-year physiotherapy students’ experiences** to inform **supportive and professional learning environments** at an early stage of entry into the profession.

Methods:

- **Design:** Qualitative, interpretive approach.
- **Data collection:** Semi-structured in-person interviews (n=3) and 1 pilot study.
- **Participants:** 2 female, 1 male (18–19 years, White British backgrounds).
- **Analysis:** Reflexive thematic analysis with respondent validation and supervisor input.
- **Reflexivity:** Research diary maintained throughout.

Results:

Main themes — Subthemes — Relationships —



Conclusions:

- Early sessions caused **discomfort**, shaped by body image concerns and social gender norms.
- **Normalization** occurred over time through **educator influence and course culture**.
- Creating inclusive, supportive environments and encouraging open discussions may enhance student wellbeing and engagement.
- **Comfort strategies:** same-gender pairing, early peer rotation, modesty aids (towels/screens).
- Findings, though limited, add to the scarce evidence base; **further research** across the diverse physiotherapy student population is recommended.

Implications: Understanding students’ experiences may help inform **curriculum design, educator training and institutional policy**, fostering more inclusive and supportive learning environments. Implementing practical recommendations mentioned may lead to **better-prepared graduates, positively impacting them and future patients**. The findings could resonate across similar programmes and institutions, showing **the research may have both local significance and broader applicability**.

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