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**Achieving competency in vaginal examinations: the challenge of balancing student learning needs with best practice in maternity care.**

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**Key Words**

Midwifery education, simulation, vaginal examination, trauma informed care

**Abstract**

Assessment of labor progress through vaginal digital examination (VE) remains one of the most challenging skills for midwifery students. As VE during labor has become a less frequent occurrence there are less opportunities for student midwives to gain mastery of the skill. Best practices for teaching and evaluating VE involve a step-wise, multi modal approach. More research is needed on how to standardize teaching for this essential skill.

**Background**

Assessment of labor progress is an essential skill for graduating midwives. In high resourced settings, prematurely diagnosing arrest of labor when subtle signs of progress are

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