

Best Practice- 1

1. Title of the Practice

Intern Exit Exam -

Interns skill evaluation through objectively structured Clinical Evaluation (OSCE).

2. Objectives of the Practice

Objectives:

- To assess the competency of interns
- To evaluate domains of clinical competency
- To demonstrate facts which underpin clinical practice but also *know how* to apply these facts

Intended outcomes:

- a) Improved clinical competency of interns
- b) Attain domains of clinical competency
- c) Better services to the patients.

Underlying principles

This facet of clinical competence relates both to behavioural and cognitive attributes. OSCEs are a common method of assessing the *shows how* aspects of clinical competency.

3. The Context:

- a) Acceptability of the test
- b) Cost efficiency
- c) Reliability and validity of stations
- d) To train examiner to objectively assess candidate performance based on the pre-set criteria and
- e) To get a reserve examiner who can step in at the last time if required.

4. The Practice :

- a) Unlike the traditional clinical exam, the OSCE could evaluate areas most critical to performance of health care professionals such as communication skills and ability to handle unpredictable patient behavior.
- b) Every intern is assessed for clinical skills. The curriculum does not include assessment of clinical skills. Hence Exit Exam introduced for the interns.
- c) The Objective Structured Clinical Examination is a versatile multipurpose evaluative tool that can be utilized to assess health care professionals in a clinical setting.
- d) It assesses competency, based on objective testing through direct observation.
- e) It is precise, objective, and reproducible allowing uniform testing of students for a wide range of clinical skills.

The advantages of Exit exams, apart from its versatility and ever broadening scope are its objectivity, reproducibility, and easy recall. All students get examined on predetermined criteria on same or similar clinical scenario or tasks with marks written down against those criteria thus enabling recall, teaching audit and determination of standards.

The students were found to perform better on interpersonal and technical skills than on interpretative or integrative skills. This allows for review of teaching technique and curricula.

The Exit exam process does serve to identify areas of weakness in the curriculum and/or teaching methods, and thus can serve as a mechanism to improve educational effectiveness.

The high reliability of Exit Exams is often at the expense of their validity. If correctly designed, Exit exams can have a beneficial impact on medical students learning and future performance.

The tasks in Exit exam depend on the level of students training. Early in undergraduate training correct technique of history taking and demonstration of physical signs to arrive at a conclusion may be all that is required.

5. Evidence of Success:

Majority of the students felt that Exit exam covers a wide knowledge area and wide range of clinical skills.

Most of the students felt that tasks included in Exit examinations reflect tasks taught, setting and context of station, felt authentic tasks were asked to perform were fair and that the Exit examination provided opportunities to learn.

6. Problems Encountered and Resources Required

The Exit Exam Team:

- a) Large number of examiners and timekeepers are required.
- b) Attaining uniformity in assessing
- c) Shortage of trained assessors.
- d) Time consuming to train the assessors.
- e) Examiners must be prepared to dispense with personal preferences in the interests of objectivity and reproducibility and must assess students according to the marking scheme.
- f) Timekeepers are required for correct movement of candidates and accurate time keeping.
- g) Exit exam is expensive in terms of manpower requirement.
- h) Construction of stations.
- i) Recruitment and Training of Standardized or Simulated Patient: Simulated patients are however expensive in terms of the time it takes to train and coach them in performing and understanding concepts.
- j) Logistics of the examination process: Enough space is required for circuit running and to accommodate the various stations, equipment and materials for the exam.

The manned stations should accommodate an examiner, a student and possibly the standardized patient and also allow for enough privacy of discussion so that the students performing other tasks are not distracted or disturbed.

7. **Notes:** The Exit exam is judged not by two or three examiners but by a team of many examiners in-charge of the various stations of the examination. This is to the advantage of both the examinee and the teaching standard of the institution as the outcome of the examination is not affected by prejudice and standards get determined by a lot more teachers each looking at a particular issue in the training. Exit exam takes much shorter time to execute examining more students in any given time over a broader range of subjects.

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