Student perceptions of Objective Structured Practical Examination (OSPE) assessments - a comparison between disciplines
Kirkman, Jack; Malcolm, Cameron John; Scott, Derek Anthony

Publication date: 2018

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Link to publication

Citation for published version (APA):

General rights
Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.

You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain.

You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal.

Take down policy
If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Download date: 10. May. 2020
Student perceptions of Objective Structured Practical Examination (OSPE) assessments

Jack Kirkman, Cameron Malcolm & Derek Scott
School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition, University of Aberdeen, Foresterhill, Aberdeen, AB25 2ZD

Background

- Objective Structured Practical Examination (OSPE) assessments of theoretical, practical and problem-solving skills at multiple stations have been adapted to examine practical skills in physiology, anatomy and sports science to enhance employability and prepare students for research projects.
- We have recently expanded the range of students formally examined by creating new assessment stations and adapting others to examine pharmacology practical skills.
- This was primarily done in response to repeated student feedback - they had heard positive comments about the OSPE experience from the student body in the year above them.
- Using benchmark statements, student, staff and examiner feedback, stations assessing contextualised skills such as numeracy, graphic interpretation, drug mechanisms and targets, pharmacokinetics, and use of physiological data to identify appropriate drug treatments were developed.

Methods

- Piloted with smaller class to make development easier (n = 22 students).
- Team of academic and technical staff involved to design, review and assess material.
- Materials and logistics to make it successful for both staff and students had to be considered and designed carefully (see Fig 2).
- Students had access to revision videos and written material via the VLE to help revise in own time, as well as Quietet revision exercises for some stations.
- Student anonymised views on the experience sought after they had received all grades and feedback using a short questionnaire. 20 of the 22 students responded.

Aims

To discover whether the OSPE practical assessment used for physiology and anatomy student cohorts could be successfully adapted for pharmacology students, and to obtain student feedback regarding the experience.

Results

How confident were you BEFORE the OSPE about your ability to complete the stations properly?

- Did you find the science aspects or the non-technical aspects of the stations (i.e. time management, organisation, communication skills etc) harder? 1 = science skills, 5 = non-technical skills

Did you prefer the OSPE to a ‘traditional’ practical?

Did the OSPE make you think about skills other than practical scientific ones that employers/project supervisors might expect you to possess?

Now you have finished your degree, how would you rate your skills now compared to when you did the OSPE earlier this year?

Discussion & Conclusions

- Positive feedback from both staff and students but we feel we can still improve.
- Feedback here is almost identical to that obtained from previous physiology and anatomy cohorts.
- In conjunction with students, we are developing animated, mobile-friendly videos to help visual learners better review the tasks/material outside the lab environment. If these are perceived as useful then we will make them available to the whole student population via the VLE.
- Surprising data regarding non-technical skills—several students stated that ‘it’s not the science that’s hard, it’s organising yourself, planning what you do, and working within time constraints that’s the hard thing’.
- Staff feel they have a more detailed understanding of their students’ capabilities and graduate attributes, helping them better advise them on their targets, goals and strengths. Results have been fed back to wider staff community to consider whether we need to enhance what we provide for students to improve their non-technical skills.
- This assessment style allows rapid assessment with large numbers. It is now scheduled at the same time of term as those for other disciplines so we can share resources and staff for the OSPE’s to further improve our efficiency and the student learning experience.