

Title: Increasing clinical skills assessments using a mobile tool

Author: Cesar Alberto Lucio Ramirez

What problem was addressed: Clinical skills assessment based on direct observation is a constant challenge for busy clinicians and overwhelmed clerkship directors. Information is generally difficult to gather and analyze, clinicians don't have time to stop and fill out forms, and that translates into limited observation opportunities for faculty and students. This limited paper based assessments don't collect any data that could be used for decision making inside the clinical setting. We intended to increase the number and frequency of direct observation clinical skills assessment in the workplace for students during their clinical clerkship.

What was done: An assessment process and system was designed and implemented throughout 7 clinical clerkship rotations. In order to achieve this, a mobile tool was constructed with local software developers. The tool was available for the most common mobile phones, had customizable rubrics, allowed for feedback to be given and gave full reports to students and faculty. It also allowed multiple assessments from multiple examiners across time. Institutional efforts were directed towards increasing the number of assessments done during rounds, ambulatory clinics, surgeries, procedures, emergency department and morning report. A faculty development workshop was delivered 11 different times through a 2 month period in order to ensure that all busy clinicians had a chance to attend. The workshop consisted of an overview of the clinical assessment process to be implemented, basic clinical skill assessment training as well as training regarding the mobile tool.

What was learned: A total of 2,958 clinical skills assessments were done in a 12 month period, 157 students and 250 faculty members participated. Students went from receiving on average 8 assessments per year to 18 assessments in a 12 month period. Data regarding number, type and frequency of the assessments was gathered, as well as data about the clinical performance of the students, types and habits of the examiners, among other valuable information. 88% of faculty reported the system simpler to use than paper based assessments, 73% of faculty mentioned giving feedback more easily than with traditional methods, 75% of faculty reported their students more engaged in their learning and 81% of faculty mentioned communication with their students improving. Finally 87% of faculty agreed that this program helped them improve their teaching as clinical educators. Increasing the number of clinical skill assessments and having faculty more eager to do them and provide feedback is a pivotal step for improving the performance of our students and ultimately the care of our community.

Reference:

1.- Norcini, J. J. (2005). Current perspectives in assessment: the assessment of performance at work. *Medical Education*,39(9), 880-889. doi:10.1111/j.1365-2929.2005.02182.x