Workplace-based assessment tools for feedback and entrustment decisions in medical education: a systematic review

Background

An enhanced educational environment in health care professions can be achieved by adequate feedback and valid clinical assessment. Competency frameworks and various approaches for assessing learners in the clinical workplace have been introduced.

Entrustment decisions combine feedback and evaluation with permission to act under a specified level of supervision and the possibility to schedule learners for clinical duties.1

Aim

To identify workplace-based assessment tools which indicate progression towards unsupervised practice, suitable for entrustment decisions and feedback to trainees in clinical education

Methods

Various assessment tools to provide learners with feedback or formative assessments, were identified. In the systematic review on direct observation tools, Kogan et al.2 concluded that few assessment tools had been profoundly evaluated and tested. Our systematic review evaluates more recent studies and validity evidence existed for many of these tools.3

Discussion

Take-home message

Many workplace-based assessment tools were identified that potentially support learners with feedback on their development and support supervisors with providing feedback. As expected, only few articles referred to entrustment decisions. Nevertheless, the existing tools or the principals could be used for entrustment decisions, supervision level or autonomy.

References:


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Workplace-based assessment tools for feedback and entrustment decisions in medical education: a systematic review

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Introduction: An enhanced educational environment in health care professions can be achieved by adequate feedback and valid clinical assessment. Competency frameworks and various approaches for assessing learners in the clinical workplace have been introduced. Entrustment decisions combine feedback and evaluation with permission to act under a specified level of supervision and the possibility to schedule learners for clinical duties. This poster summarizes a review work that aims to identify workplace-based assessment tools which indicate progression towards unsupervised practice, suitable for entrustment decisions and feedback to trainees in clinical education.

Methods: A systematic search was performed in the PubMed, Embase, ERIC and PsycINFO databases. We included undergraduate and postgraduate medical education as well as veterinary education. Based on title/abstract and full text, articles were selected using predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria. Information on workplace-based assessment tools was extracted using data coding sheets. The methodological quality of studies was assessed using the MERSQI instrument. Assessment tools were mapped to pre-formulated categories: simulation, short and long practice observations, case-based discussions and product evaluations.

Results: The literature search yielded 6,371 articles, of which 180 articles were evaluated in full text before including and reviewing 80 relevant articles. A total of 67 assessment tools were identified. Various assessment tools were used for feedback or formative assessments. In contrast, only few studies evaluated assessment tools as a resource for entrustment decisions. Validity evidence in terms of content validity, internal structure, relationships to other variables and response process was frequently reported, and the MERSQI quality score was 10.0 on average.

Discussion: Various assessment tools, sufficient to provide learners with feedback or formative assessments, were identified. An above average number of studies were identified within the short practice observations category that evaluated entrustment decision making in the operative or procedural setting. In the previously described systematic review on direct observation tools, Kogan et al. concluded that few assessment tools had been profoundly evaluated and tested. Nevertheless, in our systematic
review evaluating more recent studies validity evidence existed for many of the identified assessment tools. Some commonly used assessment tools, such as the Mini-CEX, DOPS and the OSCE, were tested on validity by multiple studies. Conclusion Many workplace-based assessment tools that can potentially support learners with feedback on their development and help supervisors with providing feedback were identified. However, few articles referred to entrustment decisions, supervision level or autonomy, likely because this area of interest has only recently received attention in the literature.