

CHOICE OF ASSESSMENT TYPE FOR CLINICAL TEACHING

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ABSTRACT

Assessment for Learning is a powerful tool to improve learning and raise the standards of the study program. Quality of assessment depends on the validity and reliability of the assessment methods. Selection of assessment methods is very significant from among the variety of methods available¹. This study aims at attempting to find out the preference of assessment methods from Clinical Teachers who involve in the assessment of the Clinical Skills of the students reading for MBBS Degree Course in the Universities of Sri Lanka.

This assessment was done via interview administered questionnaire and the analysis of different variables. This study reveals that OSCE/ OSPE was the most preferred choice for the assessment of Clinical Skills, followed by Long Case / Short Case, Essay and Viva Voce which is a notable observation.

Key words: Objective Structured Clinical Examination, Objective Structured Practical Examination, Viva voce.

INTRODUCTION

The term assessment is generally used to refer to all activities teachers use to help students learn and to gauge student progress.¹

Assessments were traditionally referenced against all candidates being assessed at the same time to provide a rank order. This is called normative referenced (or norm-referenced) assessment. The alternative is to measure a candidate's ability against a set of criteria that define the educational outcome that the test assesses. This is called criterion-referenced assessment.¹

Although assessment may be part of an evaluative process of a course, or have other purpose, teachers use assessment for either summative or formative processes. Summative assessment is to determine how well a student has performed at a fixed point in a course programmed and they are reported in the form of grades, marks or pass or fail scores. Formative assessment takes place during the course or programmed and feeds back into the learning and teaching process with an aim of helping the student learn (and for the teacher to evaluate how to help the student learn).²

Quality of an assessment depends on validity and reliability.³ Validity can be considered of three types which are face validity, content validity and construct validity.² Face validity mean that, does an examination or test look valid and does it make sense as a reasonable

way to assess the subject. Content validity mean that, does the assessment cover the appropriate and necessary content of what is to be assessed? This is usually an exercise that 'experts' do. Construct validity mean that, is the assessment an adequate measure of the construct that is the underlying skill being assessed.²

Reliability is concerned with the accuracy with which the test measures the skill or attainment it is designed to measure.² The underlying reliability questions are: would an assessment produce the same or similar score on two occasions or of measured by two assessors? (Gimps, 1994, p67). There is often a tension between validity and reliability in an assessment. Healthcare practice uses a set of complex construct integrated to help patients in a holistic way and therefore assessments are complex if they are to be valid and reliable.

Therefore it is very important to study the currently practiced assessment types in the medical schools in Sri Lanka. The main purpose of this study is to identify the most preferred type of assessments by the clinical teachers attached to various medical schools in Sri Lanka.

METHODOLOGY

Through interview administered questionnaire indicating assessment types, clinical teachers were requested to select the best two methods of assessment

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for different clinical skills which are very important to assess such as History taking, Examination skills, Critical thinking, Communication and team work

All the data were tabulated and the results were analyzed in order to identify the followings

1. Two best preferred choices of assessment methods for each clinical skill
2. Overall best choices
3. Least preferred choices

Clinical teachers from 5 universities participated in this study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Educational assessment is the process of documenting, usually in measurable terms, knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs. It is important to notice that the final purposes and assessment practices in education depends on the theoretical framework of the teachers, their assumptions and beliefs about the nature of human mind, the origin of knowledge and the process of learning.³

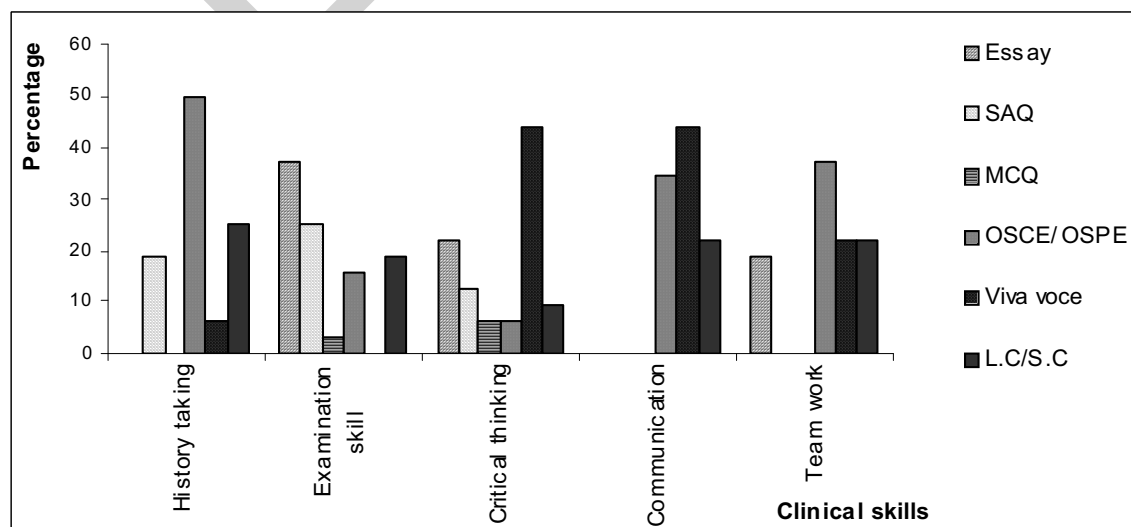
Formative assessment is a check on progress that does not contribute to pass/fail decisions, but informs teachers and learners about strengths, weaknesses and any problem areas. It is best used when accompanied by feedback to the student. It is used as part of a developmental or ongoing teaching and learning process.²

Summative assessment traditionally takes the form of tests and often occurs at the end of a term or a course. However, especially in postgraduate medical education, other sources of evidence are increasingly contributing to summative assessment. Summative assessment is used primarily to provide information about whether or not the student has reached the required standard and it can form the basis of pass/fail decisions.²

In this analysis preference of assessment types for formative and summative assessments were studied irrespective of the difference.

This study reveals that SAQ, OSCE/OSPE, Viva and L.C/S.C were selected and Essay and MCQ were not selected to assess the History taking. SAQ, MCQ, OSCE/OSPE and L.C/S.C were preferred and Viva voce not preferred as assessment type for Examination skills. All the given assessment types are chosen to assess the Critical thinking. OSCE/ OSPE, Viva voce and L.C/ S.C were preferred. For the assessment of Team work Essay, OSCE/ OSPE, Viva voce and L.C/S.C were selected and SAQ and MCQ were not selected.

MCQ is found to be the least preferred choice for assessment of competence of clinical skills. All the other methods of assessment were preferred choices of assessment for different clinical skills. It may be that preparation of MCQ type assessment is time consumable than the other types of assessment types.



SAQ - Short Answer Question
 MCQ - Multiple Choice Question
 L.C/S.C - Long Case/ Short Case

OSCE - Objective Structured Clinical Examination.
 OSPE - Objective Structured Practical Examination

CONCLUSION

OSCE/OSPE is the most preferred choice followed by viva voce & long case/ short case evaluation for overall clinical skills. L.C/S.C, SAQ, Essay and MCQ were less preferred than viva voce is notable observation.

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