Using a Targeted OSCE Station to Measure Unprofessional Behavior

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Background

Standardized patients are widely used in medical education but their use to assess professionalism is limited. With grant support from the Edward J. Stemmler, MD Medical Education Research Fund (“Stemmler Fund”) of the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME), the usefulness of standardized patients (SPs) in the assessment of professional behavior was investigated. A targeted professionalism Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) station featuring a values conflict was written. Student performance in the targeted professionalism case was compared to their performance in three other stations. A professionalism assessment was developed and subsequently revised during the course of the study (see Figures 1, 2, and 3), with the final version containing various components of American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM) core set of eight professionalism attributes and several other scales in recent medical research.

Development Cycle of Professionalism Assessment

Results

Results of the data analyses from the 2004 re-score of 80 videotaped student encounters using the professionalism assessment are presented below (see Graph 1). This graphical display highlights the similarities and differences across the three groups of raters.

Methods

A comprehensive selection process was used to create the dataset of 20 students from the 2004 End of Third Year OSCE. We first selected all students who had been cited for unprofessional behavior by the Clinical Science Academic Performance Board (CSEPB) (n=27). Two of these students did not participate in the 2004 End of Third Year OSCE and therefore were removed. The remaining 15 students were selected from the bottom and top quartiles (seven top performers and eight bottom performers) based on their overall interviewing scores across all OSCE stations. Two of the seven top performers had been cited by the CSEPB, therefore, we replaced those two with the next two students with the highest overall interviewing scores. Nine raters (3 lay raters, 3 SPs, and 3 faculty raters) reviewed 80 videotaped encounters (20 students x 4 cases) and assessed each student using the professionalism assessment (see Figure 3). Data from this scoring was used to compute descriptive statistics and conduct correlational analysis.

Conclusion

The study’s outcomes will contribute to the development of a validated professionalism assessment for use in OSCEs at other institutions. These findings have also advanced our understanding of how professional behavior in medical students is perceived and assessed by three distinct groups of evaluators.