



Objective Structural Clinical Examination (OSCE): Student’s Perception

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Citation this Article: Dr Minal Kadam, Dr Shubhangi Mande, Dr Savita Kadam, Dr Lakshmi Rachkonda, “Objective Structural Clinical Examination (OSCE): Student’s Perception, IJMSIR- October - 2022, Vol – 7, Issue - 5, P. No. 161 – 164.

Type of Publication: Original Research Article

Conflicts of Interest: Nil

Abstract

Introduction: For evaluating the clinical knowledge of students, OSCE was used as one of the summative methods. The students' potential was assessed. The traditional methods assess clinical skills but not the psychomotor and communication skills of students. The OSCE addresses the current system's flaws. The current study is designed to obtain students’ perceptions towards OSCE.

Aims and Objectives: To determine the students' perception of OSCE as a tool of assessment and its acceptance by the students.

Materials and Methods: 75 students from the VIII semester MBBS batch (CBME batch) posted in OBGY were chosen. A structured questionnaire was designed and distributed among them immediately after the OSCE and data was collected.

Results: The majority of students favoured the OSCE as a tool of assessment. 93.33% of participants strongly agreed that it should be included in the medical curriculum. 73.33% of students thought it was stress-free, while 90.33% thought it was unbiased.

Conclusion: Students were highly positive about perception of OSCE. It is reliable feasible and unbiased method of clinical assessment though it is time consuming and requires more man power.

Keywords: Medical Student, Perception, OSCE, Attitude, Assessment Tool

Introduction

The Objective Structured Clinical Examination is a versatile multipurpose evaluative tool that can be utilised to assess health care professionals in a clinical setting. It assesses competency based on objective testing through direct observation¹. It is standard method of assessment for both UG and PG students. There are several methods to assess the clinical skills of medical students .The methods considered to be traditional include short case assessment, long case assessment, multiple choice questions, and viva examination. There are also other methods such as essay questions, students’ projects, constructed response questions, tutor reports, portfolios, and log book assessment, to mention a few². Based on available evidence, OSCE is generally more valid, reliable, objective, and a powerful tool than other

traditional assessment formats such as short or long case examinations viva, etc³.

The Objective structured clinical examination (OSCE) was first described by Harden & Gleeson as "a timed examination in which medical students interact with a series of simulated patients in stations that may involve history-taking, physical examination, counseling, or patient management"⁴.

The OSCE is widely used in assessing skills not only in medical education but also in nursing and midwifery, dentistry, pharmacy, dietetics, and physiotherapy. During the OSCE examination, all candidates are exposed to the same tasks, which are completed in the same time frame and scored using structured marking sheets, which prevent bias.

The OSCE examination has undergone a lot of modifications and broadened its scope. In the OSCE, there are many "stations" in which examinees are expected to perform different clinical tasks within a stipulated time against criteria formulated for clinical skills. This shows competency in skills and/or attitude. In traditional exams, there is subjective variation in evaluating students, and recruitment of patients for clinical examination is also difficult, whereas in OSCE, there is objective evaluation of students. The students' behaviour is closely observed and scored according to standard checklists. It is a form of assessment of an expanded exam from the students' perspective. The OSCE has both advantages and disadvantages.

Advantages of OSCE

- Uniform scenarios for candidates.
- No risk of litigation.
- Allows for recall.
- No bias

Disadvantages of the OSCE

- Expensive

- Time-consuming
- More manpower is required.

Objective: To determine MGM MCH students' (VIII semester) perceptions of the observed structured clinical examination (OSCE) and its acceptance among these students.

Materials and Methods

After obtaining ethical committee approval, the study was conducted in the department of OBGY of MGM MCH. Using a questionnaire which was distributed to VIII semester students immediately after the completion of their OSCE exam. The questionnaire was developed from questionnaires used in previous studies with certain modifications and then validated.

The syllabus for OSCE was decided. Each faculty member was instructed to frame 6-8 questions to assess cognitive, problem-solving, and analytical skills. The checklist of sets of questions was prepared, which we have selected for OSCE.

The questions were in three sets. Each set contained five stations, with one resting station. Students were informed about the OSCE syllabus well in advance, and they were also familiarised with the OSCE methodology. Each station of the OSCE was of three minute duration, which was closely monitored by the faculty. The resting station was also of three minutes. Immediately after the completion of the examination, the questionnaires were distributed to students regarding their experience and their views of the OSCE examination, and data was collected and analysed. In the present study, 75 students from the IX semester were included.

Observations

OSCE assesses students' knowledge, communication skills, and competencies. This study gave an idea of the perceptions of students about their learning. A total of 75

students participated. The response of students to different questions was as follows:

Table 1: Perception of students towards OSCE

Questions	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	No response
OSCE focuses on learning objectives.	-	24	51	-
OSCE tests practical skills	-	12	60	03
Is it useful to your medical curriculum?	-	05	70	-
Was it stressful?	55	12	-	08
Is it easy to score better in OSCE?	-	12	63	-
Was it well organized?	-	-	71	04
Does it reduce bias by examiner?	-	05	68	02
Should OSCE be followed as a method of assessment?	-	02	71	02

Discussion

Almost 68% of students have strongly agreed that OSCE achieves learning objectives which was similar to studies done by Lamia Yusuf⁵

OSCE assesses clinical skills better than other methods. It forces students to change their learning style. Students start critical thinking and thus become self-directed learners and improve their clinical competencies. According to 80% of participants, OSCE tests practical skills which are similar to studying done by Shahzad A, Saeed MH Bin, Paiker S.⁶

In our study, 93.33% of participants strongly agreed that OSCE is useful for medical curriculum, which is quite higher than studies done by Nadia Jasbeen, Hamza Ehasan and Mehreen Mahmood⁷.

In our study, 73.33% of students said that there was no fear of examination and it was completely stress free, which is exactly the opposite of studies done by Nadia Jasbeen, Hamza Ehasan and Mehreen Mahmood.⁷ studies where 88% of students stated that OSCE is more stressful than viva.10.66% participants of our study has not

responded and surprisingly 16% participants thought that it is stressful.

Most of the students (84%) strongly agreed that OSCE is to score more marks than the traditional examination, which is the same as that of study done by Agnieszka Skrzypek et al.⁸

94.66% of students considered that OSCE was well organized, which was similar to study done by. Agnieszka Skrzypek, Marta Szeliga et al⁸ where as 2.7% of students did not give any response.

Our study indicates that OSCE reduces bias by examiners (90.33%) as all the students are exposed to similar stations and the same marking schemes, because of which the chance of prejudice is negligible.

In our study, 94.66% of participants stated that OSCE should be followed as a method of assessment, which is the same as studies by Nadia Jabeen, Hamza Ehsan and Mehreen Mahmod.⁶

Conclusion

The students were highly positive about their perception of the examination.

It is a reliable, feasible and unbiased method of clinical assessment of students.

OSPE is very expensive in terms of manpower.

It requires a team approach and proper planning among faculty

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