OSCEs in Distance Education: Live simulations for the web-based learner

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OSCEs
(Objective Standardized Clinical Evaluations)

- Simulated cases using trained actresses and actors (Standardized Patient SP)

- Students respond to a contrived clinical situation. The degree of response is case dependent and can vary from data collection to completion of an entire patient visit

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Widely used in academic centers across health disciplines

- Simulate clinical scenarios in a didactic course
- OSCEs help students to
- Practice high-risk clinical scenarios
- Practice assisting patients with lifestyle change
- Promote critical thinking
- Refine interviewing skills

Clearly these Distance Learners should benefit from OSCEs as well....

Constructing OSCEs for the distance learner

Consider:
- Time zones
- Secure and stable mode of long distance bi-directional communication
- Cost
- Methods for inter-rater reliability (SP = faculty)
- Methods for faculty evaluation of students
- Additional materials/supports within the course to enhance the experience
Why OSCEs were integrated into the web-based pediatric course

Decision to integrate into pediatric course:
- Final course prior to clinical rotation
- Allows students opportunity to practice clinical interviewing skills

The Ins and Outs of Pediatric OSCEs

THE TRIAL PHASE

Phase 1: Planning
- Privately contracted with SP from University of Kentucky
- Two pediatric cases were constructed and trialed by course faculty
- Acute Otitis Media
- Febrile Seizure
- Costs outlined (actress time $15.00/hr, secure phone line costs $7/minute)
Course supports

- Explicit written and verbal instructions about the OSCE assignment
- OSCE included both the interview followed by completion of an episodic SOAP note appropriate for the given chief complaint
- Review pediatric interviewing and documentation (video and ppt provided)
- Demonstration of an OSCE interview

Grading the OSCE

Two components

1. Interview

Students were asked to self-evaluate their interview incorporating feedback given to them from the SP.

Example of feedback from the Standardized Patient

Name of OSCE: FEBRILE SEIZURE

- Introduction: Student introduces herself/himself
- Addresses patient by name
- Clearly states her/his level of training
- Puts patient at ease (this is really important)
- Student asks chief complaint
- Onset of recent symptoms
- Timing: ingestion of any toxic substances? Fever? the context is what you are after: video games...
- Seizure
- Duration
- Similar episodes
- Alleviating factors...
2. Episodic SOAP Note

Students were given two weeks upon completion of the interview to submit a "chart-ready" note

Subjective: Based upon history collected
Objective: Students to write an appropriate note for given history
Assessment: Choose one diagnosis and provide 3 competing diagnoses
Plan: Specific detailed plan for chosen diagnosis that is evidenced based

Phase 2 Spring 2010: Initiation

- 10 student volunteers
- "Clinic" appointments scheduled every 30 minutes via a secure conference line
- All calls recorded
- Scheduled call included feedback time from the SP to the student

Phase 3: Outcome

- Costs:
  - Per student = $ 9.60 ($ 7.50 [SP time] and $ 2.10 [conference line])
- Feedback
  - SP: requested grading be incremental for each category rather than all or none; clarity on depth of feedback to give students
  - Students: 100% felt positive learning experience; boasted self confidence; wanted to do more
  - Faculty: requested students add more depth to their reflection of the experience; requested the SP be more dramatic on inappropriate questions and push students a bit more when interviewing
Summer Term 2010
- All students in pediatric course scheduled to have an OSCE assignment
- Plan to expand to other courses
- As of March 2011: 142 OSCEs completed with 100% positive student response

Refining the process

OSCE Scenarios
- SP must be very explicit upon initial opening statement he/she is in the clinic so not to imply this is a phone triage scenario
- Work on exaggerating responses of SP for non-essential questions asked by students when collecting the history
- Rotate scenarios (now have 3) must consider course content in relation to schedule

Evaluation Process
- Identify interviews with red flags which require faculty feedback on the interview and those that are sufficient with only SP feedback
- Explore peer review of interviews
Strategy for teaching students in beginning courses:
- Integrate completed interviews into the Health Interview course for student learning
- Identify areas of common interviewing weaknesses and develop strategies early in program to address issues

Developing a richer experience
- Continue to explore Web-Camera capabilities for the OSCE
- Incorporate video and/or photos to augment the objective portion of the exam

Excerpt of an OSCE
"... to reach wide neighborhoods of men."

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