The Impact of an Objective Structured Teaching Evaluation on Faculty Teaching Skills.

Reference:

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Background

There is a small but growing body of evidence about Objective Structured Teaching Exams (OSTEs). The authors define OSTEs as using standardized students in scripted simulation scenarios to teach or assess teaching skills. They have been used for program evaluation, to assess teacher skills, and in programs to improve faculty and resident teaching.

Two methods used to evaluate faculty development programs for improving teaching skills are participant self assessments and learner ratings of the participants’ teaching skills.

Purpose

To examine the impact of an OSTE used for faculty development of teaching skills on: (a) faculty teaching as both self assessed and as reflected in learner ratings of teaching, (b) faculty satisfaction with the program.

Type of paper

Research – prospective cohort study

Key Points on the Methods
The educational intervention was an OSTE for faculty development, with 3 teaching cases - feedback, bedside teaching, and outpatient precepting. Each faculty member did 3-4 OSTE cases over a year. Medical students were trained a standardized students, as well as to provide feedback to faculty. Outcome measures as below.

**Key Outcomes**

Over 4 years 46 faculty members participated in the OSTE.
- Self assessment of faculty teaching abilities with a retrospective pre-post-test analysis - significant improvements in all seven teaching domains of the self-assessment with large effect sizes
- Comparison of faculty teaching evaluations for the 6 months before and after the OSTE - no improvement in faculty teaching evaluations in the 6 months following the OSTE.
- Participant satisfaction questionnaires re their OSTE experience - very satisfied
- Faculty future teaching plans - they were likely to change their teaching practices as a result of participation.

**Key Conclusions**

The authors conclude that after participation in a faculty development OSTE, faculty self-report improvement in their teaching skills and planned to use strategies learned. Participants’ teaching evaluations failed to improve; however faculty expressed high satisfaction with the OSTE. Faculty value direct dialogue with students to provide specific feedback. OSTE faculty development programs are a valuable means of improving perceived clinical teaching.

**Spare Keys – other take home points for clinician educators**

A nicely designed study. Why was there no improvement in an ‘objective measure’ of teaching - the student evaluations? Possible explanations: a ceiling effect (perhaps reflecting a selection bias of participants); a disconnect between what was taught in OSTE and what is evaluated by trainees; need for a ‘booster’, or amount / timing of OSTE.

The resource requirements of a rigorous OSTE preparation are potentially huge.

Retrospective pre-post assessments may be a very good way to evaluate faculty performance after a faculty development activity, as participants can better evaluate baseline skills once they know what the standard is.