

Encounter cards: A tool for competency based assessment in a multi-learner, multi-faculty rotation

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New assessment tools are needed to implement competency- based clinical training in residency education. Encounter cards are an emerging educational tool that may be well suited to the contemporary dynamic academic environment, in which a single rotation may involve multiple learners working with several teachers each. We describe the creation and implementation of a successful competency-based daily encounter card (DEC) system in 1 academic clinical department.

We created a novel encounter card based on the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada's CanMEDS framework as applied to one specialty. Faculty were given workshops on the use of the DEC and how to give effective feedback. We then created a system whereby all learners are required to meet with their supervisor at the end of each clinical shift to complete a DEC, debrief and receive feedback. DEC's are then collected and collated daily. Low scores are immediately flagged for assessment directors. A collated report on DEC scores and comments is used at rotation midpoint and at the end of the rotation by assessment directors to complete an overall rotation assessment report for each learner.

The DEC system has been well received by learners, teachers and administrators alike. The system has facilitated timely formative assessment as well as quantitative and qualitative data for summative assessment. Our database now includes nearly 20 000 encounters over the last 7 years. DEC's are a powerful tool for facilitating timely feedback and assessment in contemporary residency education.