

What do Examiners Assess: Performance or Behaviour?

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(Abstract)

The Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) offers a framework for the assessment of clinical competence. The validity and reliability of this examination is enhanced - though not guaranteed - by the use of direct observation, detailed checklists and standardized patients.

In poorly controlled examinations, the student's score may be threatened by characteristics of the patient or the examiner. Moreover, the examinee may bring factors into play other than his/her performance. A well-known phenomenon in this respect is the primacy effect, which refers to the dominating influence of a first impression over following impressions. The primacy effect was investigated in the following way:

We had at our disposal videotaped performances of 21 students obtaining a history from a standardized patient. These performances had been assessed independently by seven teachers, with the help of a checklist. Out of these tapes, another video was constructed, containing only the opening phrases of the examinees. All fragments were cut before the examinee addressed the problem of the patient. This collection of initial behaviour of the examinees was shown to a group of students, standardized patients and teachers (N = 43). They were asked to predict for each examinee the quality of the performance.

The rank order correlation with the scores of the seven teachers was 0.43. In other words, the predictions turned out to be prophecies.

Students Evaluate Psychiatric and Psychosomatic Lectures

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(Abstract)

We will report on the evaluation of a cross-section study of a medical teaching program by 121 students in the 2nd clinical term at the University of Erlangen in 1988.

We asked the students to evaluate the existing medical curriculum and to specify where they thought they had obtained their theoretical and

practical knowledge, and to communicate their wishes regarding these points. We were specifically interested in the evaluation of the local psychiatric and psychosomatic lectures and in the question of how far former participants of Anamnesegruppen and non-participants differed in their evaluations.