ABSTRACT NUMBER: OF1

Clinical Teachers As Professionals And Role Models: The View Of Impending Medical Graduates

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Background
Professionalism is an increasingly important domain in undergraduate medical training. Role-modeling is considered the most effective way of learning professionalism; where direct observation of good professional behaviour is essential for acquiring and internalizing its elements. This study assessed whether our senior medical students understood the definition of professionalism, and to what extent their clinical teachers demonstrated good professional conduct as fitting in their view of a role model.

Methods
A self-administered questionnaire survey was conducted on 70 students in semester ten of International Medical University in December 2007, one month before the conclusion of their undergraduate training. The questionnaire included one multiple-choice question on the definition of professionalism, seven items adapted from Szauter et al on observed behaviour of clinical teachers (four-point Likert scale: 1:"Hardly ever" to 4:"Consistently") and three items on role-modeling. The responses of the seven Likert-scaled items were further grouped into "no issue" (hardly ever observed) and "issue identified" (three other options). Chi-square and Mann-Whitney-U tests were used for analyses.

Results
All 70 students (65.7% female) completed the survey. Forty one (59.4%) chose the best definition for professionalism. Significant number expressed concerns in three out of seven items on clinical teachers' behaviour, with issues identified in 72.9% (negative comments on colleagues), 41.4% (negative comments on patient or family) and 28.6% (inappropriately disclosing confidential information) respectively. Students who chose the best definition on professionalism appeared to have observed their teachers making negative comments on colleagues more often than their peers ($p=0.019$).

Good professional conduct (52.2%) and personal characteristics (23.2%) were regarded by the students as the foremost attributes of a role model. More students chose university faculty as role models compared to hospital staff, $p<0.001$, and most (98.6%) indicated that role models played a role in their academic and personal achievements.

Conclusions
Nearly half of our impending graduates had not grasped the concept of professionalism. However, they observed the daily conduct of their teachers, noted some concerns and acknowledged the importance of good role model in their achievements. Clinical teachers should practice self-awareness in their daily conduct, especially when making remarks on patients and colleagues.

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ABSTRACT NUMBER: OF2

Ensuring The Quality Of PBL Facilitators

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Background
Problem Based Learning (PBL) is one of the curriculum delivery tools used in the preclinical phase of the medical programme in International Medical University. One of the factors determining the success of PBL is the quality of its facilitators. Amongst the strategies implemented to ensure this were the PBL facilitator meetings which were held pre and post-system/foundation course. Our aim here was to study the perception of the facilitators on the pre and post PBL meetings in improving their facilitation skills.

Method
A pre tested questionnaire who distributed to PBL facilitators requesting their perception of pre and post PBL meetings in improving facilitation skills. It also included their suggestions to enhance PBL delivery and a self evaluation of their facilitation skills.

Result
The response rate was 84.62%; 72.72% had attended the pre and post PBL meetings out of which 84.21% found the meetings useful. Some of the suggestions to improve the pre and post PBL meetings were that the meetings be made mandatory and includes the content expert. A student representative being present would help in getting the student's perspective. Amongst suggestions to improve the PBL facilitation in IMU were that training should be more hands on, conducted separately for the new and experienced facilitators and new facilitators be allowed to tag the experienced facilitators for more than one session to enhance their confidence. PBL triggers should be vetted and fewer learning issues identified (students' appraisal of the facilitator should be given weight in staff appraisal). The suggestion that the PBL be conducted by a content expert was mooted out due to the liability that it may become a teaching session. The self evaluation showed an average score of seven, indicating that our facilitators were quite confident.

Conclusion
Majority of the respondents agreed that the pre and post PBL meetings are useful and continuing them will enhance the PBL delivery.

ABSTRACT NUMBER: 0F3

Constructing Single Best Multiple Choice Question (MCQ), How Successful Are We?

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Introduction

Student assessment is an important component in medical education. The Multiple Choice Question (MCQ) using well constructed Single Best Answer (SBA) format can test higher cognitive domains required of the future competent doctor in knowledge application, clinical reasoning and decision-making. Unfortunately most academics have not been taught how to develop a well-constructed SBA. This paper aims to evaluate the extent to which our construction of SBA items meets the rules advocated by North American and Canadian examiners[1,2].

Methodology

The end-of-posting MCQ examination in December 2007 for Surgery, Internal Medicine and Family Medicine from a Year 3 medical school was selected. Each of the three disciplines contributed twenty SBA items (questions). The construct of the items were evaluated according to 3 characteristics: i) includes a stem with a clinical scenario and a lead-in question, ii) passes the cover test iii) does not use negative questions.

Results

Only 27 items (45%) of the 60 items selected had stems with clinical scenario. Of these 27 items, 14 (52%) could not pass the cover test because negative questions were used and 3 items (11%) had ambiguous lead-in questions. The other items appear to be an adaptation from the True/False MCQ.

Conclusion

Lack of training in what makes a good SBA item can explain why they are poorly constructed. Negative questions confuse students and do not contribute to assessment because we want to know if students know the right things rather than some obscure impossibility. Findings indicate a dire need for training of academia involved in writing MCQ. It is recommended that a dedicated committee be set up to evaluate the MCQ bank for construct and other technical flaws.

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