

Workplace Based Assessment Yet To Find Its Place In Pakistani Context

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Workplace-based assessment (WBA) is a type of an assessment tool, used in a formative manner, to assess the performance of a resident in an environment where he /she work. This assessment is different from the usual practice of assessment in summative form as done in exit exam in a simulated environment. Traditional assessment therefore fall short of true reflection of actual performance of a doctor, as working environment may be far different from the set up created for exit examination.¹ However there are issues with implementation of this mode of assessment as well as its reliability and validity. The stakeholders' perspective is also important in this regard as their understanding and how they implement it, is also important.²

Workplace provides an excellent environment where practices can be observed and documented. For this purpose Multisource feedback (MSF) can be obtained from all the healthcare providers and in some cases from patients as well about the performance of a doctor. In addition documentation in the form of logbooks and portfolios maintained by residents provides another opportunity for assessment. For practical performance assessment tools currently in use are Direct Observation of Procedural Skills (DOPS), Mini-Clinical Evaluation Exercise (mini-CEX) and Case-based discussion (CbD).³

In context of surgical and allied specialties DOPS is meant to observe procedural skills. The trainee himself chooses the procedure to be assessed (usually of short duration), and the observer as well. Time allocation is such that in 15 – 20 minutes the skill is performed and immediately feedback is provided. A tool is developed for assessing and giving

feedback. The Mini-CEX, which was developed by American Board of Internal Medicine, assesses clinical encounter like history taking skills, physical examination performance, attitude and behaviors in a real-time. This exercise is also meant for immediate feedback so that corrective strategies for future are incorporated. Same applies for other tools used for WBA.⁴

College of Physicians & Surgeons Pakistan has also suggested to different faculties to develop WBA strategies in their fields. For this purpose training workshops of supervisors are conducted so as to educate them about the usefulness of this approach and how to develop tool for the assessment. The actual challenge lies in educating faculty members and developing tools for the assessment. The reliability of the tool developed and way the exercise conducted, in a manner that it truly reflects the objective, to validate this are important.⁵ Studies are conducted in various institutions across Pakistan to find out acceptance of this mode of assessment and mixed response is obtained.⁶ However as it is an international trend and accepted approach, thus Pakistani training programs must incorporate them in their residency program.

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