

How reliable are Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) Scores in Assessing Undergraduate Nursing Students' Skills?: A literature review

Introduction:

The Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) is considered as the most accepted tool for evaluating the competence of medical students. Assessment of clinical skills of the students can be considered as one of the most crucial elements of their training and the OSCE is an effective tool to evaluate critical aspects of the profession of nursing. This tool evaluates the ability of nurses to communicate with the patients, establish reports of patients, and interpret patient-related data.

Aim: This research aimed to analyze the reliability of the OSCE in reflecting the skill performance of the undergraduate nursing students.

Methodology: This research was performed using qualitative methodology. This literature review was carried out by including previous researches focused on the significance of OSCE for nursing students. The literature review considered the studies conducted worldwide for analyzing the reliability and validity of OSCE.

Results: Previous studies revealed that OSCE contributes to improving the confidence levels of students in some of the disciplines and prepares them for their roles as clinicians prior to their placement as professionals. The benefits of OSCE are not only limited to the nursing students; rather, it also enables the instructors and evaluators to customize the scenarios for meeting the specific learning objectives and acquiring constructive feedback for improving the enthusiasm and instruction for teaching.

Conclusion & implications: The OSCE method of assessment has been proven as the effective method for testing the basic level performance of nursing students. In the light of outcomes of the previously conducted researches, the OSCE can be considered as a reliable method for the assessment of cognitive, affective and psychomotor skills of the nursing students. Equity is guaranteed during the OSCE because the assessment of student performance is carried out for evaluating similar skills of the students with the similar levels of difficulty. The literature review also demonstrated that despite the efficacy of this assessment tool, taking the OSCE examination might be considered as stressful by some of the students. In this regard, there is the requirement to improve the briefing and instructions which are provided to the students about this test. Due to the reliability of this assessment, some of the researches suggested that this assessment tool might be implemented for the routine examination of practicing nurses.