

Student perspectives on the assessment of communication in health professions education

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Abstract

Academic discourse about assessment is often lacking representation of learners. The learner is at the centre of both teaching and assessment experiences and offers an important perspective on the value/utility and authenticity of assessment approaches. With the understanding that communication is an integral part of healthcare, it is essential to explore how communication skills education and assessment is perceived by students (1, 2). Integrating communication skills learning and assessment with other assessment in intensive health professional programs can be challenging. This symposium aims to provide insight about the perspectives that students, from various health professions from different countries, have about the formative and summative assessment of communication skills in their programs. The discussion will focus on both commonalities and differences in how communication skills assessment is perceived by students and educators.

The session will start with an evaluation of the various approaches used to assess communication skills in general, and in particular in the programs represented.

We will pose questions and explore the students' perspectives on the extent to which:

- Students themselves value/prioritise the assessment of communication skills;
- Students think their program values/prioritises the assessment of communication skills;
- Students think communication skills have a place in summative assessment in addition to formative; and
- The assessments in their program enable them to learn about and demonstrate their skills in communicating with patients and colleagues in clinical settings.

Audience members will be encouraged to ask their own questions to enhance their understanding and to seek the students' perspective on approaches and innovations.

The named authors will not themselves run this session but will facilitate the recruitment of learners and provide support and help in enabling them to run this symposium successfully. We are therefore not able at this stage to provide exact details of the presentations and presenters, but will ensure that an interprofessional approach, with learners from a range of institutions and programs is presented.

This symposium is modeled on successful symposia run at previous International Association for Communication in Healthcare (EACH) conferences (1, 2). The student symposium run at the 2022 has led to a publication which is in press with Patient Education and Counselling.

References (maximum three)

1. Malhotra A, Gregory I, Darvill E, Goble E, Pryce-Roberts A, Lundberg K, Konradsen S, Hafstad H. Mind the gap: Learners' perspectives on what they learn in communication compared to how they and others behave in the real world. *Patient Educ Couns.* 2009 Sep;76(3):385-90.
2. Schopper HK, Mohamed NA, Seegel M, Gorina K, Silverman J, Rosenbaum M. Lost in translation: Cultural divides in communication skills teaching identified in the ICCH 2016 student symposium. *Patient Educ Couns.* 2017 Nov;100(11):2071-2073.