

OSCE Interest Group

The OSCE Interest Group (OIG) was formed by Carol Fordham-Clarke (Kings College London), Anne Pegram (Kings College London) and Maggie Nicol (City University London). It is a sub-group of the Clinical Skills Network (www.csn-cetl.ac.uk) and its aim is to provide a forum for discussion about OSCEs in nursing and midwifery. The response to an email to CSN members revealed a lot of interest and the first meeting took place on 27th February 2006 at Kings College London.

Twenty four people attended and were welcomed by Professor Anne-Marie Rafferty, Head of the Nightingale School of Nursing & Midwifery at Kings College London, who kindly provided the venue and refreshments.

After a brief discussion about the aims of the OSCE Interest Group attendees were divided into 3 groups to address the following issues:

1. Are OSCEs a good way to assess clinical skills?
2. What do we need to consider in good practice guidelines for OSCE development

Lively and interesting discussions ensued and the following is a summary of the issues raised as being those in need of discussion/development.

Process of OSCE Assessment

- Need robust processes to provide audit trail for QAA purposes
- Which skills and levels – should this be standard? Will NMC Essential Skills Clusters influence this?
- When – timing of OSCEs in programme
- Teaching – need to teach in the same way as we are assessing
- Preparation of students, examiners and patients is important
- Marking criteria & grading - ? national standards
- Moderation procedures
- Feedback to students
- Equity of stations/ scenarios
- Disability/cultural – managing diversity
- Do Post registration/Post graduate OSCE have different needs/issues
- Logistical organisation of OSCEs – tips and suggestions

Resource issues

- Skills Lab availability
- Human resources and adequately prepared
- Financial resources
- Students need opportunities to practise these skills in Skills Lab and clinical placement

Professional issues

- Involvement of clinicians
- Relationship with Practice Based Assessments

- Fail rate in OSCEs higher than in practice
- Mentors needs support/training
- Does the OSCE measure competence and fitness for practice – is it transferable

Benefits of OSCEs

- Develop student confidence
- Students value their achievement in OSCEs
- Values clinical skills as equal to other assessments
- Encourages partnership with clinical colleagues
- Less subjective than assessment in practice
- Complement assessment in practice – not instead of assessment in practice

Lunch provided excellent opportunities for networking.

The Group agreed that they would like to meet again and the next meeting date was set for Monday 4th December 2006 at City University London.