

Scope of Professionalism Mini-evaluation Exercise Tool in Teaching and Assessing Professionalism among Medical Students

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Abstract

Medical professionalism refers to a set of values or behaviors, which eventually establishes the trust that the general population has on healthcare professionals. It will not be wrong to document that conventional assessment tools were not able to assess the complex domains of professionalism. Workplace-based assessment tools have been identified as the solution to assess professionalism among medical students during the routine clinical practice and accordingly multiple such tools have been tried under heterogeneous settings. The Professionalism Mini-Evaluation Exercise tool is an effective method to assess inter-professional skills, doctor-patient relationship, reflective abilities, and time management. In conclusion, medical professionalism plays a defining role in shaping the careers of medical students. It is the need of the hour to employ the professionalism mini-evaluation exercise tool in the field of medical education as both a learning and an assessment tool to inculcate the different aspects of professionalism among students.

Keywords: Medical education, professionalism mini-evaluation exercise, workplace-based assessment

INTRODUCTION

Medical professionalism refers to a set of values or behaviors, which eventually establishes the trust that the general population has on healthcare professionals. In fact, professionalism determines the nature of relationship between a doctor and their patients, the quality of care offered, and the outcomes of the illnesses. Professionalism in the field of medical education has been acknowledged as one of the core competencies across different regulatory bodies around the world.^[1] Thus, it has been given immense importance in both undergraduate and postgraduate curriculum and hence it needs to be taught, and subsequently assessed to improve the quality of health care.

PROFESSIONALISM

Professionalism has been defined in a variety of ways and there is no standard definition, which has been accepted universally across different nations and cultures.^[1,2] In

other words, professionalism is a multi-dimensional concept that comprises attributes in the attitude and conduct domains. However, in order to ensure that the medical students adopt a professional behavior in their careers, it becomes extremely crucial to nurture the same during their training period. As it has been said on multiple fronts, anything which has not been assessed is never taught and thus professionalism needs to be periodically assessed.^[1,2]

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PROFESSIONALISM MINI-EVALUATION EXERCISE

It will not be wrong to document that conventional assessment tools were not able to assess the complex domains of professionalism.^[2] Workplace-based assessment tools have been identified as the solution to assess professionalism among medical students during the routine clinical practice and accordingly multiple such tools have been tried under heterogeneous settings.^[3] One of such tools was mini-clinical evaluation exercise, which was used to assess clinical skills of students and professionalism as a whole without giving adequate impetus on specific observational behaviors in realistic contexts that are associated with medical professionalism.^[1,2]

This led to the introduction of professionalism mini-evaluation exercise (P-MEX), which primarily covered assessment of inter-professional skills, doctor-patient relationship, reflective abilities, and time management.^[2,4] However, subsequent modifications have been made in the tool keeping in mind the cultural contexts in different settings and attributes of communication skills, empathy, decision-making skills, leadership skills, and ethics have been also assessed.^[1,4] Even though, the tool has been used in a small number of settings, the encouraging sign is that the tool has demonstrated good validity and reliability.^[5] The tool can be used in any settings where the behavior of students can be observed (such as small-group sessions and ward encounters). The interactions using the tool are less time-consuming and permit assessment of students on multiple occasions.^[2,4]

It has been advocated that different faculty members should assess the students in a structured form and the assessment should be followed by feedback about the performance of the students (what was done well and what could have been done better).^[1] The tool aids in the assessment of observable behaviors with the help of global rating or set of rubrics and promotes self-reflection. However, in order to ensure its successful implementation, we have to sensitize the faculty members and students

about the scope of the tool and the ways in which it can advance learning.^[4,5] Further, the tool or the rating scale can also be validated with a set of subject experts and the entire process of assessment can be made more objective and beneficial.^[2,5]

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, medical professionalism plays a defining role in shaping the careers of medical students. It is the need of the hour to employ the Professionalism Mini-Evaluation Exercise tool in the field of medical education both as a learning and an assessment tool to inculcate the different aspects of professionalism among students.

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Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

Ethical approval

Not applicable.

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