

Introduction of OSPE (Objective Structured Practical Examination) in Department of Physiology, Govt. Medical College Srinagar



Medical Science

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* **Suhail Ahmad Gilkar**

Assistant Professor, Department of Physiology, Govt. Medical College Srinagar, J&K, India
* corresponding author

Shabir Ud Din

Lecturer, Department of Physiology, Govt. Medical College Srinagar, J&K, India

ABSTRACT

Background: Objective Structured Practical Examination mode of examination has been proved useful in assessing practical skills both at undergraduate as well as post graduate level of examination. It has been seen that OSPE is highly result oriented but most of people among faculty found it difficult to implement on a regular basis because of the time and space constraints.

Objectives: To evaluate methodology, feasibility and acceptance of implementation of OSPE as examination tool in our college with recent enhancement of intake capacity from 100 to 150 students.

Methods: Total duration of study was three months. Students and faculty were sensitized about this mode of examination through power point presentations. We divided 150 students into 5 batches and conducted examination over a period of 5 days. Each session had 8 questions with 2 observed and 6 unobserved stations. Feedback was taken from both the students and the entire faculty a day after examination.

Results:

Results were expressed as percentage of participants in the feedback. Out of 150 students, 111 participated in the feedback. 92.8% of students stated they were not aware of OSPE form of examination earlier. 90.99% of students stated that OSPE can be helpful in improving their practical skills. 89.18 % of students rated the organization of flow between stations as smooth. 79.27% students came up with suggestions that OSPE should be conducted more frequently.

7 faculty members participated in the feedback. All of them rated the total time for conduction of the exam as adequate and all of them suggested that OSPE should be regularly conducted in the department.

Conclusion:

Based on the feedback from students and faculty, the acceptance of OSPE was quite high and both students and the faculty recommended its regular implementation in future practical examinations.

Introduction:

In evaluating knowledge, comprehension and skills as well as motivation and feedback, mere single examination does not fulfil all the functions of assessment¹. Thus more attention is given to the skills and attitudes thought to be important in a good doctor. Conventional practical exams assess only a single case, and do not provide the real time assessment of demonstration of individual competency thereby increasing the chance factor and decreasing the reliability in assessment². Objective Structured Practical Examination (OSPE), as proposed by Medical Council of India proved to be objective and reliable method especially in assessing a variety of practical skills in a limited period of time. OSPE is modified version of OSCE which has been used in clinical teaching since 1971 and has been found to be reliable and valid assessment tool to test competency of students in clinical practice³. Large number of institutes show reluctance in using OSPE on a regular basis because of the time and space problem³. The aim of this study was to evaluate the feasibility of regular conduction of OSPE in a batch of 150 students and its educational impact and acceptance among the students as well as the faculty.

Methodology:

OSPE was conducted in Govt. Medical College Srinagar for the first time in preclinical setting. Total duration of study was 3 months. 150 students of 1st year MBBS were divided into 5 batches of 30 students each. The students were made aware of the pattern of examination a week before the test by using power point presentation. Each examination session consisted of 8 questions, which comprised 2 procedure station (observed) 6 question stations (unobserved) and 2 rest station.

Each station was of 5 minutes duration. Each batch of 30 students was further divided into three equal batches of 10 each, which appeared in the examination simultaneously. After completing the exam session, the students were asked to wait in another hall and were not allowed to leave the hall till the entire

batch was through in order to avoid unfair means. The faculty of other department were invited as observers for reviewing the examination procedure. After the completion of the examination a properly validated feedback⁴ was given to both faculty and the students (Annexure 1 and 2).

Total time taken for completion of examination of one batch was around 1 hour including the time for instructions to the students and the preparation for conduction of the exam.

Results:

A total 150 students appeared for the OSPE examination. 111 students participated in the feedback. 92.80% of students stated they were not aware of OSPE form of examination earlier, and 90.99% revealed that they had appeared in this form of examination for the first time. 90.99% of students stated that OSPE can be helpful in improving their practical skills, whereas 87.38% of students agreed that OSPE was helpful in rating their own learning standards.

In the questions pertaining to conduction of OSPE, 89.18 % of students rated the general ambience of the examination hall as quiet and organization of flow between stations as smooth. 70.20% of students rated time available for questions as adequate. The presence of observers on the procedure stations affected the performance of most of the students as it increased their anxiety because of being observed. Out of 111 students, only 79.27% students came up with suggestions that OSPE should be conducted more frequently. The result of student feedback is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Results of student feedback.

Feedback after OSPE examination	% of students who answered in affirmation
Information properly conveyed	93.24

Not aware of OSPE form of examination earlier.	92.80
OSPE helpful in rating their own learning standards	87.38
OSPE helpful in improving practical skills	90.99
Time available for questions was adequate	70.20
Smooth organization of flow between stations	89.18
Shall OSPE be made a regular part of practical examination?	79.27

Also 7 faculty members participated in the feedback. All of them were aware of the pattern of OSPE questions before the session. All of them rated the total time for conduction of the exam as adequate and organization of flow between stations as smooth. All of them were of the opinion that time provided for completion of tasks was adequate and that OSPE can be conducted for a batch of 150 students on regular basis.

Discussion

Around the globe for last so many years now, OSPE has replaced the conventional scheme of practical examination in many of the medical institutions². The reason for the wide acceptability of OSPE is its objectivity and the convenience it brings both to teachers and the students alike¹⁰. In a study conducted by Malik et al. OSPE was rated by the students as reliable, effective, useful, interesting & challenging examination although it was considered taxing both mentally and physically¹². The main aim of this study was to evaluate the feasibility and assess the acceptance of implementation of OSPE for a batch of 150 MBBS students in the Department of Physiology, Govt. Medical College Srinagar. The OSPE was smoothly and efficiently conducted with the help and support from all the faculty members in the department and the students were made aware of this method of examination by prior sensitization using power point presentation. The OSPE was followed by a feedback obtained from both students and faculty. The students' feedback revealed that OSPE was widely acceptable and was appreciated by 99% of them. The students were in favour of the OSPE. The feedback provided scope for improvement and further refinement of the method. This type of assessment serves as a tool for testing multiple dimensions of student performance because it tests both skills and knowledge. This study showed that OSPE was useful in helping the students know their own learning standards and abilities. Also it was found that OSPE was more objective, measured practical skills better, and eliminated examiner bias. The feedback from the faculty members revealed that majority of them felt that OSPE is feasible for a 150 student's batch and such exercises need to be repeated more frequently. They were of the opinion that OSPE should form a regular part of both internal as well as final assessment of the medical students.

Conclusion

This study concludes that OSPE has a wide acceptability both among students as well as faculty. OSPE can be conducted for 150 students on regular basis. OSPE can be used as a form of both internal as well as final assessment either alone or can form a part of our traditional method of examination taking.

Annexure 1:

Student OSPE feedback form

1. Were you aware of OSPE examination before this session? Yes/No
2. Did you appear for the OSPE examination for the first

time? Yes/No

3. How seriously did you take this examination? Seriously/Casually
4. Were you conveyed about the time/ place/format of examination beforehand? Yes/no
5. Were the instructions given before the session clear and precise? Yes/ No
6. Was the time available for the questions adequate? Yes/No
7. Did the presence of observer on procedure stations affect your performance? Yes/No
8. If Yes, How?
9. Were the instructions on stations clear/ precise? Yes/No
10. How do you rate the general ambience of the examination hall? Noisy/Quiet/Disruptive
11. How was the organization of flow between stations? Smooth/haphazard
12. Did you take the knowing of procedure seriously before OSPE exam? Yes/No
13. Do you take the knowing of procedure seriously after OSPE exam? Yes/No
14. Can OSPE be helpful in improving your practical skills? Yes/No
15. How do you rate your performance in OSPE? Excellent/good/average/Poor
16. Was OSPE helpful for you in rating your own learning standards? Yes/No
17. Shall OSPE be made a regular part of practical examination? Yes/No/Not sure

Any suggestions to make OSPE exam less stressful and/or more helpful for you?

Annexure 2:

Faculty OSPE feedback form

1. Were you aware of this kind of examination before this session? Yes/No
2. Were you aware of pattern of questions of OSPE before this session? Yes/No
3. How do you Rate the time taken for completion of OSPE exam for 150 students? Excessive/ Adequate/ Inadequate
4. Were the conducting staff helpful/ cooperative? Yes/No
5. How do you rate the ambience of the examination hall? Noisy/quiet/disruptive
6. How was the organization of flow between stations? Smooth/haphazard

7. Was the time provided in tasksExcessive /Adequate/Inadequate
8. Was the punctuality maintained ? Yes/No
9. Can OSPE be helpful for improving teaching skills? Yes/No
10. Can OSPE be conducted for a batch of 150 students on a regular basis as an assessment tool? Yes/No

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