Logbook for the clinical elective year at the University of Zurich

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**Background:** Workplace-based learning in clinical electives is usually difficult to standardize. This situation is partially desired as it represents clinical variability, however, for the students it may not be clear which aspects of the training experience are thought to be essential by supervisors. A common instrument to facilitate self-regulated (and self-reflected) learning in this field is a logbook, which was introduced into the undergraduate clinical elective year at the University of Zurich in 2010. The logbook included sections derived from the Swiss Catalogue of Learning Objectives [1], in particular “General Skills”, „Clinical Pictures“ and „Problems as Starting Points for Training“ for self-monitoring of learning progress. In addition, for each single elective a form for a formative Mini Clinical Examination Exercise (Mini-CEX) [2] was included.

**Methods:** All students of the first two implementation years were asked to complete a questionnaire in respect to usefulness of the different logbook sections, and in respect to the procedure of the Mini-CEX. Ratings were given on Likert scales from 1 to 6 (with “1” as the worst, and “6” as the best rating).

**Results:** From 430 students, 289 questionnaires could be included into analysis (67.2%). For support of learning, the chapters “General Skills” (mean 3.41, SD 1.40), “Clinical Pictures” (mean 3.53, SD 1.35) and “Problems as Starting Points for Training” (MW 3.58, SD 1.29) were rated neutral. Qualitative analysis of free comments showed, that students complained about practical examples of procedures and clinical pictures being too detailed. Also, they stated that they did not know for whom they were recording their learning experience. In respect to the Mini-CEX, it was stated to be “very fair”, and that students received specific and constructive feedback (mean 4.86, SD 1.07).

**Discussion:** For the revised logbook version we eliminated the “clinical picture” section in favour of a self-reflective section for each elective rotation. We also reduced the number of “General Skills” to an essential set of tasks. In addition, we emphasized the self-regulatory aspect of the logbook within the introductory remarks, and during lectures in the term preceding the elective year. Mini-CEXes however, were encouraged to be performed more often, desirably every month.

**References:**