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**Formative Assessment of Clinical Skills in Veterinary Medicine**

Marc Dilly
Clinical Skills Lab, University of Veterinary Medicine Hannover
marc.dilly@tiho-hannover.de

Using OSCEs for Formative Assessment of Clinical Skills in Veterinary Education
Marc Dilly, Simon Engelskirchen, Susan Kopke, Andrea Tipold University of Veterinary Medicine, Germany

Over the last years different adjustments of legislation have led to considerable changes in European veterinary education. Hereby, with regard to preparing students for the practical field of veterinary profession a focus was set on competence based learning outcomes within the academic training framework. Competence based teaching, learning and assessing is an essential aspect of the numerous curricular reforms enacted. The European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE) evaluates and accredits its members to give assurance to the public, the veterinary students and the veterinary establishments. Among adequate knowledge and profession-inherent attitudes EAEVE’s objectives especially comprise practical skills. In order to assess practical skills the objective structured clinical examination (OSCE) is an appropriate assessment format in undergraduate and postgraduate medical education. Depending on educational purposes the OSCE can be developed and applied as a summative assessment tool for testing or licensing minimum accepted standards, or as a formative assessment tool to provide immediate feedback.

To establish a transition between tightly organised studies and following career the University of Veterinary Medicine Hannover (TiHo) realised the “Practical Year”, comprising a twelve-month orientation phase during the 9th and 10th semester, which is followed by the final state examination. During that year students have to pass a minimum of a ten-week traineeship at one of the university’s clinical or paraclinical institutes. This traineeship is designed to involve students into university’s clinical and scientific working routine. Currently, in collaboration with two clinics, the Clinical Skills Lab of the TiHo is routinely running two formative OSCE programs as part of the traineeship during the “Practical Year”:

The first OSCE program was introduced in October 2013 and developed as part of the surgical education in the Clinic for Swine and Small Ruminants. Hereby, a traineeship is offered three times a year giving 36 students the opportunity to participate. To prepare these students for their surgical interventions as well as to leaven a proper performance in the operating theatre for clinic staff, a mandatory specific skills lab training including the (mini-)OSCE was implemented. While being instructed by skills lab and clinic staff students practice basic surgical skills. The following (mini-)OSCE covers six stations by focusing on scrubbing, knotting and suturing ability *in vitro*. 
In February 2014 the second OSCE program was introduced in collaboration with the Clinic for Small Animals and developed to provide students with feedback about their clinical performance after the ten-week traineeship. Five times a year a maximum of 100 students rotate every week between different fields of clinical specialization (e.g. internal medicine, surgery etc.). Before starting the traineeship, students receive a one-week skills lab training to prepare them for clinical working in the different fields of specialization. The following OSCE covers 15 stations assessing the competence of clinical skills by using low and medium fidelity models. Particularly by providing immediate feedback through subsequent group debriefing and individual written response both OSCE programs primarily aim at aligning student’s subjective perceived competence and increasing student’s clinical, practical and personal skills.

This conference lecture aims at sharing some of our experiences made in organising and administrating OSCEs, which we gained during the development of the two formative OSCE programs at the TiHo.