Self-assessed Clinical Skills Competency in Medical Students – results of a pilot module within the eMediqual project

Teodora Hoinoiu, Iosif Florin Cobzariu, Bogdan Hoinoiu, Raluca Dumache, Simona Dragan, Marius Raica

Victor Babes University of Medicine and Pharmacy Timisoara Romania

tstoichitoiu@umft.ro cobzariu_iosiiflorin@yahoo.com hoinoiu@umft.ro
raluca.dumache@umft.ro simona.dragan@umft.ro raica@umft.ro

Introduction: Practical skills and abilities represent an important target for medical education. These skills are necessary for diagnosis of diseases and therapeutic maneuvers. By now, simulation is a widely used training method, especially in the area of practical skills. During the last years Romanian medical school curricula have been reformed by building in modules to put more focus on students’ practical skills. This study was designed for evaluation of the proposed modules for a new discipline of Clinical Skills, which has been established at the “Victor Babes” University of Medicine and Pharmacy Timisoara. The evaluation was piloted within the POSDRU project eMediqual.

Methods: 108 medical students (yrs II-V) were selected randomly to take part in 5 modules of 18h of tuition, which included stations for communication, examination of vital signs, basic life support, immobilizations, gloving and gowning, knots and sutures, bandages, ECG-recording, injections and infusion set-up on manikin. All the students received the theoretical support in advance. In the practical sessions they were split in groups of three: one was the provider of the maneuver, one was the beneficiary (potential patient) and one was the observer. After each exercise they switched roles in order that everyone be evaluated by colleagues and achieve best practical skills in shortest amount of time. At the end of each module data was collected by questionnaires.

Results: 35.5% of the students were from clinical clerkship and the rest from preclinical years. From the clinical clerkship only 12.96% of the students have attended similar modules in the past. They recognized that the modules changed their interpretation on clinical skills to be achieved at graduation from medical school. The peer-to-peer evaluations revealed that previous theoretical knowledge and increased awareness during procedures, significantly contribute to identify and correct mistakes. 93.1% of medical students believed that education on simulators was the best method to achieve the practical skills needed during their clinical clerkship.

Conclusion: This study showed that practical skills education is necessary before entering clinical clerkship for all medical students. Practicing clinical skills on manikins makes students feel competent enough to face real situations. On the other hand, certain technically demanding or invasive procedures performed by clinicians on real patients need to be observed by students, until they feel confident about performing them independently, under supervision.