

Assessing competencies in the clinical workplace: Early lessons from an implementation attempt in the GP Training

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ABSTRACT

Background: For the last two decades, medical educators have extensively paid attention to competency-based medical education (CBME). CBME and assessment have been rapidly adopted to certify graduating physicians' readiness to practice. Although a plethora of papers focuses on developing and designing strategies for implementation of CBME, there is a need for a data-driven approach to inform future implementation paths.

Summary of work: In a pilot study, we developed a competency-based assessment protocol based on the CanMEDS competency framework and investigated its feasibility and acceptability in the workplace. The intervention comprised of two single assessment tools incorporating CanMEDS roles, key, and enabling competencies relevant for performing a clinical consultation. We implemented this intervention in the Flemish General Practitioner's (GP) Training program, involving both trainees and trainers. Between March 2021 and June 2021, the study participants had to use the tools for assessing competencies. For measuring our study outcomes, participants had to fill in a series of questionnaires, with closed and open-ended questions.

Summary of results: The competency-based assessment intervention facilitated workplace assessment and discussing negative feedback when needed. Participants found the tools time-efficient for workplace-based assessment. Additionally, competency growth and development became more visual after repeatedly using the tools. However, participants claimed that the competencies were formulated in a complex and unfamiliar language hindering the evaluation process.

Discussion & Conclusion: A competency-based assessment system for the workplace could be successfully implemented, with some considerations. On one hand, participants' answers illustrated that such a system could accommodate workplace-based assessment and be time efficient. Nevertheless, translating the competencies into meaningful professional activities proved to be challenging and burdensome.

Take-home Message: To successfully implement CBME in the workplace, it is necessary to invest time and effort into developing and designing tools with easy-to-understand and close to practice language.

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