

Adapting an undergraduate dental OSCE during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Topics: Student learning

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Abstract

Background

Acquiring psychomotor and clinical skills are an essential part of dental students' training. This particular aspect posed a unique challenge for an undergraduate Prosthetic final year module in a South African dental school during the Corona virus disease-19 (COVID-19) pandemic. Teaching of clinical skills was completely interrupted during the country's initial response to the pandemic. With the easing of country restrictions and the consequent return of final year dental students, it called for innovative and novel strategies to address their learning and return to clinical practice.

Objective

The purpose of the OSCE was to assess the impact of the interruption of clinical practice and clinical competence whilst following a strict COVID-19 protocol included in the setting.

Methods

An OSCE station was created which had all the questions planned to be included, the student therefore did not have to move from station-to-station. It was also based in an enclosed clinic, which was prepared using the advocated COVID protocols. All clinics were equipped with the required instruments and equipment required for each question. To ensure social distancing, groups of students were scheduled individually, thus the OSCE was conducted over 4 days with no more than 22 students per day.

Results

Performance of students in the OSCE provided feedback of clinical competence, preparedness to return to clinical practice after a prolonged period of absence and it also identified gaps in the teachings. Students felt safe as COVID protocols were in place and were strictly adhered to.

Conclusion

This assessment after such a long period of absence from clinics, including the assessment plan, structured feedback sessions involving the department gave the students confidence on their return to manage their patients.

Keywords: OSCE, COVID-19 pandemic, Assessment plan, Clinical competence, Clinical confidence