

Title: Is GP Registrar self assessment accurate?

Introduction: Self-assessment of knowledge and clinical competency is essential for life-long learning in medical practice. It is also a stimulus for continuing professional development but is seldom explicitly explored in postgraduate training.

Objectives: This study evaluated the ability of GP Registrars to accurately self-assess their clinical skill sets.

Method: Seventy (60%) of the 120 GPT1 registrars who commenced GP training with Generalist Medical Training (GMT) in January 2016 completed a self-assessment questionnaire on their first introductory day. The registrars were asked to rate their clinical skill clinical competence (history taking, communication and examination skills, investigation and management plan) on a Likert scale of 1-5. Registrars' performances in observed simulated consultations, as measured by experienced GP supervisors, were also collected. Pearson product-moment correlations were then calculated between registrars' self-assessment ratings and their scores in the observed consultations.

Results: Weak to moderate correlations were found between expert performance measures and registrars' self-assessment. The lower-performing registrars generally rated themselves higher than the experts did, while the higher-performing registrars rated themselves lower. Experts' ratings were moderately correlated with the ratings of the higher-performing registrars with the highest congruence observed in history taking skills (0.41), examination skills (0.42) and investigation plan (0.47). Expert ratings were very weakly correlated with the ratings of lower-performing registrars in these domains (0.08, 0.16 and 0.03 respectively).

Conclusion: The findings of this study suggest that self-assessment has educational merit as a measure of clinical performance and as a potential stimulus for continuing professional development/life-long learning. This study highlights the importance of expert observation in conjunction with self-assessments particularly for lower performing registrars who can then be identified and supported with improving their clinical skills and self-assessment skills using the expert feedback. It is therefore important that educators formally incorporate the teaching of self-assessment skills into their curricula.