Direct Observation as a Tool for Assessment and Feedback

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Relevant Financial Disclosure(s)

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• I have nothing to disclose
Objectives

- Discuss the benefits of direct observation as a feedback and assessment tool.
- Describe the steps involved in performing direct observation.
- List strategies to make direct observation fit into day-to-day clinical work.
Benefits of Direct Observation

Patient benefits

Learner benefits

“Teacher” benefits

Trainee performance x Appropriate Supervision = Safe, effective patient-centered care

Kogan JR et al. Academic Medicine. 2014; 89
What steps maximize benefit?

• Simplify the construct
• Ask ahead of the encounter
• Be a fly on the wall
• Provide immediate feedback
• Focus on observed behaviors
• Provide specific suggestions for improvement.
Fitting In Direct Observation

First Patient

Increase the frequency

Last patient

Make time

Keep it short

Take notes
Feedback from direct observation provides rich narrative but one time point cannot be easily generalized to other contexts.

For assessment decisions, direct observation partners with a variety of other assessments: knowledge exams, standardized patient assessments, simulations.

Frequent sampling, meaning observations within many different contexts and with numerous assessors, will support both continued learner growth and assessment.
Summary Slide

• Frequent direct observation with feedback facilitates the development of expertise in trainees.

• Ideal observations focus on skills where the learner desires feedback and where the observer knows the focus before the observation occurs.

• Frequent, brief observations across multiple contexts and with multiple different observers can facilitate rich narrative to guide assessment of skills.
Identify an Action Step:

What change could you initiate today to facilitate one additional observation of a learner each week?
References:

- Kogan JR et al. Reconceptualizing Variable Rater Assessments as Both an Educational and Clinical Care Problem. Acad Med. 2014; 89:00–00.
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- van der Velueten CPM, Schuwirth LWT, Dreissen EW et al. Twelve Tips for programmatic assessment. Medical Teacher. 2015, 37: 641-646