



Am I ready for it? Students' perceptions of meaningful feedback on entrustable professional activities

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"It would be helpful if the supervisor recommend what you have to do, exercise or read to improve your skills and attitude"

"Someone who is trustable and capable on all aspects (...), who gives feedback focused on future performance, (...) the expectation when you are a vet"

"Just written feedback is not enough. The supervisor should write down the feedback and provide an oral explanation"

"Feedback needs to be focused on whether you can do this on your own or not."

Background

Receiving meaningful feedback is a frequently voiced desire of students in health care rotations.¹ The use of entrustable professional activities (EPAs) can help to improve student assessment within competency-based education.^{2,3}

Aim: to illustrate what students' perceptions are of meaningful feedback viewed as conducive to prepare for an EPA unsupervised.

Methods

An explorative qualitative multi-centered study. Three focus groups with undergraduate students in the clinical phase.

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Two guiding questions were used:

- (1) What do you perceive as meaningful feedback to optimally prepare for performing the presented entrustable professional activity?
- (2) Which information sources should or could provide this feedback?

Take home message

This study showed that students who are training to perform an EPA unsupervised have clear ideas about how, when and from who feedback should be delivered.

Results

Students' preferences to meaningful feedback on EPAs were quite similar irrespectively to their institution or clerkship type.

Feedback should...

- come from a variety of sources
"The supervisor could be anyone (experiences vet, owner, assistant, teacher, student), the only criterion is that the feedback is constructive"
- come from a credible, trustworthy supervisor knowing the student well
- be delivered in a safe environment and stressing both strengths and points for improvement
"The feedback must come directly after the task, not a day (or more days) after it"
- be provided immediately upon the observed activity and include instructions for follow-up observation.

Students would appreciate feedback that refers to the ability to perform the EPA unsupervised.

Conclusion

This study is one the first about specific student perceptions on meaningful feedback when performing an EPA. Our results are consistent with general literature about feedback.

However, related to the preparation for the execution of an EPA, specific aspects of feedback turned out to be essential as highlighted by our participants.

References:

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