



Australasian Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine (AFRM) 2021 Fellowship Clinical Examination

The 2021 AFRM Fellowship Clinical Examination was conducted at multiple sites on Saturday, 1 May 2021:

NSW: Royal North Shore Hospital (including interstate/NZ candidates virtually), Sydney
VIC: St Vincent's Hospital, Melbourne
QLD: Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, Brisbane

This document provides generic feedback from the examiners about candidate performance across the 2021 AFRM Fellowship Clinical Examination. Candidates were examined across 10 clinical stations, including one written station.

Stations 1 and 13: Chronic Pain

Learning Objective 2.2.1	Recall basic knowledge of chronic pain
Learning Objective 2.2.2	Complete a comprehensive assessment of a patient presenting with chronic pain and determine the potential for rehabilitation
Learning Objective 2.2.3	Formulate a rehabilitation management plan specifying appropriate modalities of assessment and treatment

Candidates performed well in the following areas:

- Good general understanding of pain and the importance of multidisciplinary management
- Sensitive and supportive communication with the role player/patient
- Non-pharmacological management of pain

Candidates performed poorly in the following areas:

- Demonstrating a comprehensive understanding of the concept of chronic pain
- Explaining specific strategies and how the strategy can help
- Responding to the patient's specific concerns
- Remembering the specific context of the question

Other comments

- Candidates need to:
 - address the questions being asked
 - give targeted and structured answers
 - read and analyse the specific scenario in the candidate information
 - use language that patients can understand, avoiding medical jargon.
- Having a good general understanding of pain and the importance of multidisciplinary management is not enough to address the questions being asked.

Stations 2 and 14: Spinal Cord Injury (SCI)

Learning Objective 2.11.1	Recall basic knowledge of spinal cord injury and disease
Learning Objective 2.11.2	Complete a comprehensive assessment of a patient with stable spinal cord injury/disease and evaluate potential for rehabilitation
Learning Objective 2.11.3	Formulate a management plan that specifies necessary medical, physical and functional rehabilitation goals and treatments in inpatient, outpatient and community settings

Candidates performed well in the following areas:

- Interpretation of the ASIA classification

Candidates performed poorly in the following area:

- Specific knowledge of spinal cord syndromes
- Understanding hand/upper limb rehabilitation for a SCI patient
- Knowledge of specific cervical orthotics
- MRI interpretation

Other comments

- Candidates need to address the question being asked (e.g. not discuss general SCI rehabilitation when a specific upper limb question is asked).
- Answers that are general and do not address the question specifically do not attract marks.

Stations 3 and 15: Administration and Leadership

Learning Objective 1.2.1	Plan and implement a realistic and appropriate rehabilitation program that is problem oriented, goal-driven, time-limited and directly addresses the needs and expectation of the patient and family.
Learning Objective 1.3.4	Design, implement and monitor service delivery
Learning Objective 2.9.3	Formulate a rehabilitation management plan that specifies appropriate modalities of assessment and treatment

Candidates performed well in the following are:

- Knowledge of rehabilitation teams

Candidates performed poorly in the following areas:

- Knowledge of specific assessment tools
- Knowledge of factors related to tool selection, reliability and validity for service evaluation

Other comments

- Be succinct, do not ramble.
- Candidates need to listen carefully to the question, as they often confused assessing patients with assessing services
- Some candidates had limited knowledge of this area.

Stations 4 and 16: Capacity

Learning Objective 1.1.2	Determine the nature and extent of disability and activity limitation or participation restriction
Learning Objective 1.2.1	Plan and implement a realistic and appropriate rehabilitation program that is problem oriented, goal-driven, time-limited and directly addresses the needs and expectation of the patient and family.
Learning Objective 1.2.2	Describe, use and coordinate assessments and therapies of the interdisciplinary team
Learning Objective 1.3.1	Discuss the global organisation of health services at national and state level, and the impact of government policy on the provision of rehabilitation medicine services and services for people with disabilities
Learning Objective 2.12.3	Formulate a management plan that specifies necessary medical, physical and functional rehabilitation goals and treatments in inpatient, outpatient and community settings

Candidates performed well in the following area:

- Communication with the role player/patient

Candidates performed poorly in the following areas:

- Providing a specific outcome of the capacity assessment
- Awareness of specific structures to assess capacity
- Using a structured process to assess capacity

Other comments

- Candidates need to:
 - be aware of their impact of body language
 - use open-ended questions
 - avoid use of jargon
- This is a common clinical scenario that requires a structured approach.

Stations 5 and 17: Foot and Ankle

Learning Objective 1.1.1	Describe the potentially disabling consequences of disease, disorders and injury
Learning Objective 1.1.2	Determine the nature and extent of disability and activity limitation or participation restriction
Learning Objective 1.2.1	Plan and implement a realistic and appropriate rehabilitation program that is problem oriented, goal-driven, time-limited and directly addresses the needs and expectation of the patient and family.
Learning Objective 1.2.2	Describe, use and coordinate assessments and therapies of the interdisciplinary team
Learning Objective 2.8.1	Recall basic anatomy and physiology of the musculoskeletal system
Learning Objective 2.8.2	Complete a comprehensive assessment of a patient presenting with musculoskeletal disease or injury, and evaluate the potential for rehabilitation
Learning Objective 2.8.3	Formulate a rehabilitation management plan specifying appropriate modalities of assessment and treatment

Candidates performed well in the following area:

- Communication with the role player/patient

Candidates performed poorly in the following areas:

- Differential diagnoses of the condition
- Lack of understanding of the biomechanics of orthotics
- Understanding the broad concepts of exercise prescription
- Providing a comprehensive response to the question on the benefits of smoking cessation

Other comments

- Answers need to be tailored to the questions asked
- Candidates need to improve their knowledge of musculoskeletal conditions.

Stations 7 and 19: Guillian-Barré syndrome (GBS) – Neuro

Learning Objective 1.1.1	Describe the potentially disabling consequences of disease, disorders and injury
Learning Objective 2.9.3	Formulate a rehabilitation management plan that specifies appropriate modalities of assessment and treatment
Learning Objective 2.9.8	Assess and manage the rehabilitation of a patient with myopathy and neuropathy

Candidates performed well in the following area:

- Management of issues encountered commonly in other areas of rehabilitation medicine.

Candidates performed poorly in the following areas:

- Knowledge of the clinical and diagnostic features of GBS
- Knowledge of car modifications for disabled patients
- Contracture management

Other comments

- Candidates need to analyse the clinical scenario provided
- Strategies that are appropriate in the community may not be appropriate in an inpatient setting
- Generic answers that do not answer the question do not add value
- Candidates often spent time explaining unnecessary information.

Stations 8 and 20: Chronic Wound Management

Learning Objective 1.2.1	Plan and implement a realistic and appropriate rehabilitation program that is problem oriented, goal-driven, time-limited and directly addresses the needs and expectation of the patient and family.
Learning Objective 2.5.1	Outline the basis and management of illness and injury in older people
Learning Objective 2.5.2	Complete a comprehensive patient assessment that identifies disability resulting from illness and/or injury in old age and evaluate the potential for rehabilitation
Learning Objective 2.7.4	Provide subacute hospital (phase I) care to a patient with lymphoedema and/or related disorders

Candidates performed well in the following area:

- Communication with the role player/patient

Candidates performed poorly in the following areas:

- Comprehensive knowledge of the pathophysiology of wounds and wound management
- Understanding compression garments

Other comments

- Candidates need to:
 - analyse the clinical scenario in the candidate information – generic answers about causation, when the question referred specifically to the patient, did not attract marks
 - address the question being asked.

Stations 9 and 21: Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

Learning Objective 1.1.3	Predict the degree of functional improvement that may be achieved with appropriate rehabilitation
Learning Objective 2.12.1	Outline the epidemiology, pathophysiology, prognostication, acute treatment and prevention of traumatic brain injury
Learning Objective 2.12.3	Formulate a management plan that specifies necessary medical, physical and functional rehabilitation goals and treatments in inpatient, outpatient and community settings

Candidates performed well in the following area:

- Assessment of post-traumatic amnesia (PTA)

Candidates performed poorly in the following areas:

- Providing structured answers
- Providing a limited response to a question, where a consultant should provide a more comprehensive answer
- Understanding the impact of medications on recovery and the evidence of medication use in TBI
- Understanding the impact of PTA on therapy
- Understanding the complex interaction of factors that exist in return to work.

Other comments

- Candidates need to:
 - listen carefully to the question
 - address the question being asked; for example, when a parent asks; 'What can I do ...?' requires a different response to what staff can do.

Stations 10 and 22: Disability / Musculoskeletal

Learning Objective 1.1.1	Describe the potentially disabling consequences of disease, disorders and injury
Learning Objective 2.3.2	Complete a comprehensive assessment of an adult with developmental/intellectual disability
Learning Objective 2.3.3	Form a rehabilitation plan in consultation with Persons Responsible and carers who are able to facilitate the patient's participation in the plan
Learning Objective 2.8.3	Formulate a rehabilitation management plan specifying appropriate modalities of assessment and treatment

Candidates performed well in the following area:

- Good communication with the patient/role player and use of non-jargon language

Candidates performed poorly in the following areas:

- Understanding the specific contributions of disease/disability to the clinical scenario
- Communication strategies with disabled patients
- Non-verbal pain assessment

Other comments

- Providing a general answer on delirium was not an adequate response – remember to read the clinical scenario and analyse how this would impact on the case
- Address the questions being asked.

Stations 11 and 23: Gait (static)

Learning Objective 2.11.2	Complete a comprehensive assessment of a patient with stable spinal cord injury/disease and evaluate the potential for rehabilitation.
Learning Objective 2.11.3	Formulate a management plan that specifies necessary medical, physical and functional rehabilitation goals and treatments in inpatient, outpatient and community setting – principles of upper and lower limb orthotics including gait orthosis

Candidates performed well in the following area:

- General gait abnormalities – for example, reduced step length, reduced cadence

Candidates performed poorly in the following areas:

- Systematic approach to gait analysis
- Knowledge of common stand and swing phase abnormalities
- Knowledge of the normal gait cycle and the muscle activation required for each component
- Knowledge of orthotic prescription
- Knowledge of terminology in orthotics and prosthetics

Other comments

- Gait analysis remains an important skill.
- Abnormalities may only occur in a specific phase of gait; therefore, an answer may not be correct if an abnormality is not listed with reference to the specific phase.
- When asked to describe abnormalities, remember that comments used to describe normal gait, such as 'independent', 'nil gait aid', will not attract marks.