

Basic Training Mini Clinical Evaluation Exercise (BT Mini-CEX) Exploratory Study – at a glance



The Royal Australasian
College of Physicians

Aim

Since the introduction of [mini-CEX](#) into BT in 2008, there have been almost 40,000 cases submitted via the BT Portal. This study aimed to gain insights into:

- Trends and relationships between trainee and supervisor satisfaction
- Time reportedly taken for observation and feedback
- The complexity of the case the mini-CEX focussed upon
- Frequency and nature of qualitative comments provided on the assessment form

Methods

A stratified random sample of 384 mini-CEX assessments taken from the BT portal was merged with additional information from the College database and analysed.

Key Results

Sample characteristics

- Equal proportions of mini-CEX records for each training year (1st, 2nd, 3rd) and calendar year (2010-2013) and a 3:1 proportion of assessments taken from Adult Medicine (AM) compared to Paediatrics & Child Health (P&CH).
- 79% of mini-CEX assessments were completed in an in-patient setting.
- The most commonly reported patient problems related to the cardiovascular system (20%) and the respiratory system (12%).
- Mean time taken to observe the mini-CEX assessment was 21 min. Mean time taken to provide feedback was 12 min.
- AM trainees performed a higher proportion of their mini-CEX on highly complex cases and within in-patient settings compared to P&CH trainees.
- More experienced trainees more likely to complete their mini-CEX on highly complex cases and in in-patient settings.

Satisfaction with the mini-CEX

- Both trainees and assessors were reasonably satisfied with using the mini-CEX.
- There was a moderate positive correlation between assessor satisfaction and trainee satisfaction with using the mini-CEX.

Clinical performance feedback

- The highest clinical performance scores were received for professional qualities/communication and the lowest scores were received for physical examination skills.
- Tendency for more complex cases to be awarded higher overall clinical performance scores.
- No relationship between clinical performance scores on the mini-CEX and performance in the Divisional Clinical Examination or years post-Fellowship of the mini-CEX assessor.
- Clinical performance scores showed very high internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.964$).

Written feedback

- Assessors provided at least one written comment (strengths and/or suggestions for development) in 92% of mini-CEX cases. Both comments were provided in 73% of cases.
- Assessors were most likely to provide suggestions for development in 2010 and less likely to provide comments with each subsequent year.
- Assessors were less likely to provide suggestions for development if they rated the trainee highly for overall clinical performance.
- Majority of comments provided were of moderate quality or above and focused on medical expertise and communication.

Key Recommendations

Upon consideration of the findings of the BT Mini-CEX Exploratory Study, it is recommended that the College:

- evaluate mini-CEX data on a regular basis to assess changes over time and the impact of any training or resources provided to supervisors/assessors.
- conduct similar investigations into other assessment tools used within RACP training programs.
- conduct more in-depth qualitative research focusing on the mini-CEX assessment and the optimum conditions under which the mini-CEX is completed for trainees with differing levels of experience.
- explore the relationship between clinical performance scores on the mini-CEX with Clinical Examination data and years post-Fellowship of the assessor with a larger sample.
- explore opportunities to provide supervisors/assessors with additional support/resources in order to ensure consistency in the way the mini-CEX assessment is undertaken.
- explore ways to improve the quality of the assessors' written comments on mini-CEX forms.
- communicate to assessors the importance of providing written feedback to trainees on the mini-CEX forms.

The full report is available at www.racp.edu.au/page/reports

For further information about the BT Mini-CEX Exploratory Study please contact evaluation@racp.edu.au