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Australasian Faculty of
Rehabilitation Medicine

Australasian Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine (AFRM) 2023 Fellowship Clinical Examination

Examiner Feedback

The 2023 AFRM Fellowship Clinical Examination was conducted at Gold Coast University Hospital, Gold Coast on Saturday 13 May 2023.

This document provides generic feedback from the examiners about candidate performance in the 2023 AFRM Fellowship Clinical Examination. Candidates were examined across 10 clinical live stations.

Strong candidates demonstrated empathy and rapport with the role player, linked the stem to the specific patient to provide individualised answers, answered the questions with as many relevant answers as possible and did not just provide generic lists. They also considered a biopsychosocial model, had exposure to learning from the whole rehabilitation medical doctor team, and were structured and organised in their responses.

Stations 1, 13, 25 – Developmental and intellectual disability (live)

Theme	1.1 Patient Evaluation
Learning Objective	1.1.2 Determine the nature and extent of disability and activity limitation or participation restriction

Theme	1.2 Patient 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	1.2.2 Describe, use and coordinate assessments and therapies of the interdisciplinary team.

Candidates performed well in the following areas:

- Falls prevention in a community setting
- Cognitive impairment in Down syndrome
- Future care planning in someone with intellectual and developmental disability
- Most candidates demonstrated good communication skills and gained rapport with the role player

Candidates performed poorly in the following areas:

- Not providing answers that were specific to the clinical scenario outlined in the stem; for example, considering approaches to monitor cognitive decline in the setting of intellectual disability or identifying the impact of bereavement on the patient
- Limited knowledge of practical management strategies to optimise rehabilitation for people with intellectual and developmental disability

Other comments

- Use the information provided in the stem to provide answers specific to the clinical scenario
- Answer questions in a structured manner; for example, managing factors intrinsic and extrinsic to the patient as an approach to falls prevention.

Stations 2, 14, 26 – Traumatic brain injury (live)

Theme	2.12 Traumatic Brain Injury
Learning Objective	2.12.1 Outline the epidemiology, pathophysiology, prognostication, acute treatment and prevention of traumatic brain injury
Learning Objective	2.12.2 Complete a comprehensive assessment of a patient with traumatic brain injury and evaluate the potential for rehabilitation
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 areas:

- Risk factors associated with seizures following TBI
- Behavioural management in TBI

Candidates performed poorly in the following areas:

- Interpretation of hormone test results
- Strategies to support the children of a parent with TBI

Other comments

- Candidates should:
 - listen carefully to the question and, if unsure, ask for it to be repeated
 - provide structured rather than scattergun answers to the question being asked
- Strong candidates demonstrated good communication skills, including empathy; however, weak candidates lacked the confidence expected of a junior rehabilitation physician practising independently.

Stations 3, 15, 27 – Burns communication (live)

Theme	2.4 Illness and Injury of the Child and Adolescent
Learning Objective	2.4.1 Describe illnesses and injuries that result in disability and activity limitation or participation restriction in childhood and adolescence

Candidates performed well in the following areas:

- X-ray findings of heterotopic ossification (HO)
- HO treatment options
- Weight management and mood issues
- Most candidates demonstrated good communication skills

Candidates performed poorly in the following areas:

- Management of itch
- Multi-disciplinary approach to weight loss
- Knowledge of burns rehabilitation

Other comments

- Employ a systematic approach to describe medical imaging studies
- Provide as many reasonable answers as possible to attract points, rather than focussing on the explanation of individual points.

Stations 4, 16, 28 – Foot and ankle (MSK) (live)

Theme	1.1 Patient Evaluation
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

Theme	1.2 Patient 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

Theme	2.8 Musculoskeletal Medicine
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 areas:

- Generally, candidates demonstrated good communication skills and appropriate patient interactions
- Immediate management of soft tissue injuries

Candidates performed poorly in the following areas:

- Performance of the physical examination was reported to be poor for many candidates. Examiner feedback specific to this were:
 - information provided to patient during the examination was lacking
 - gait assessment was performed poorly
 - palpation of ankle and foot and identification of injured ligaments was not at the expected level
 - knowledge of special tests was limited
- Demonstrated limited knowledge of a rehabilitation management plan for a recurrent ligamentous sprain

Other comments

Use a methodical, logical approach to physical examination. Limited practice of physical examinations is evident to examiners when the candidate displays a lack of confidence and structure.

Stations 5, 17, 29 – Administration (live)

Theme	1.3 Administration and Leadership
Learning Objective	1.3.2 Discuss ethical and legal issues relevant to rehabilitation service management
Learning Objective	1.3.3 Relate appropriate management principles to effective staff and team management
Learning Objective	1.3.4 Design, implement and monitor service delivery

Candidates performed well in the following areas:

- Indications for an acute review in a medical spinal clinic; however, some answers required more specific details (e.g. 'complications of a neurogenic bladder', rather than 'neurogenic bladder')
- Strategies to improve service delivery in rural and regional areas
- Demonstrated good time management during the station

Candidates performed poorly in the following areas:

- Features of a high-quality health service
- Individual and system factors that promote culturally safe healthcare.
- Analysis and interpretation of the data provided in the tables was limited. Many candidates re-stated the data without synthesising the information.

Other comments

Candidates were respectful and had appropriate interaction with the role player.

Stations 7, 19, 31 – Young stroke (live)

Theme	1.1 Patient Evaluation
Learning Objective	1.1.2 Determine the nature and extent of disability and activity limitation or participation restriction
Learning Objective	1.1.3 Predict the degree of functional improvement that may be achieved with appropriate rehabilitation

Theme	1.2 Patient Management
Learning Objective	1.2.2 Describe, use and coordinate assessments and therapies of the interdisciplinary team

Candidates performed well in the following areas:

- Factors that may contribute to post-stroke shoulder pain
- Prognosis of return of movement 6 months following a stroke

Candidates performed poorly in the following areas:

- The utility of functional electrical stimulation in chronic post-stroke shoulder pain
- Vehicle modifications likely to be required for a person with 1 functional arm

Other comments

- It is recommended that trainees gain clinical exposure to potential vehicle modifications for people with disability
- Candidates should listen carefully to the questions and provide answers specific to the clinical scenario.

Stations 8, 20, 32 – Geriatric rehabilitation (live)

Theme	2.5 Illness and Injury in Older People
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	2.5.3 Formulate a rehabilitation management plan in consultation with the patient, family and general practitioner

Candidates performed well in the following areas:

- Lung function test interpretation
- Pulmonary rehabilitation
- Legal implications of appointment of a power of attorney.

Candidates performed poorly in the following areas:

- Frailty
- Osteoporosis exercise recommendations

Other comments

Candidates should answer the question being asked (e.g. specific exercise recommendations, rather than focussing on the general management of osteoporosis).

Stations 9, 21, 33 – Amputee rehabilitation (live)

Theme	2.6 Lower Limb Amputation
Learning Objective	2.6.2 Complete a comprehensive patient assessment that identifies the type of lower limb amputation and any medical factors relevant to prosthetic rehabilitation
Learning Objective	2.6.3 Prescribe appropriate temporary and definitive prostheses
Learning Objective	2.6.4 Formulate an interdisciplinary rehabilitation management plan including review and coordination of patient care

Candidates performed well in the following areas:

- Modalities use in the management of stump oedema
- Pre-prosthetic management for a transtibial amputee
- The benefits of using a rigid removal dressing

Candidates performed poorly in the following areas:

- Contraindications of a silicone liner
- Explanation of how an amputee can safely mobilise up and down stairs using forearm crutches

Other comments

- Some candidates did not display confidence in their responses. Trainees are encouraged to seek out clinical exposure to the early phase of amputee rehabilitation
- Candidates are encouraged to listen to key words in the question and to manage their time effectively during exam questions
- Candidates should practice exam techniques, including providing structured responses to questions.

Stations 10, 22, 34 – Non-traumatic spinal cord injury (live)

Theme	2.11 Spinal Cord Injury and Disease
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:

- The differential diagnosis of non-traumatic spinal cord injury
- Transverse myelitis, with appropriate explanations provided in layperson's terms

Candidates performed poorly in the following areas:

- The ASIA examination and interpretation of motor and sensory levels to determine the neurological level
- Weak candidates used medical jargon when communicating with the role player

Other comments

- Weak candidates did not apply the information in the stem to their interpretation of the ASIA examination
- It is recommended that candidates learn to perform the ISNCSCI (ASIA) examination and practice in a clinical setting.

Stations 11, 23, 35 – Cancer rehabilitation (live)

Theme	1.2 Patient 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

Theme	2.7 Lymphoedema and Related Disorders
Learning Objective	2.7.1 Recall basic knowledge of lymphoedema and related disorders
Learning Objective	2.7.3 Formulate a lymphoedema management program

Theme	2.8 Musculoskeletal Medicine
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 areas:

- Multidisciplinary approach to lymphoedema management
- Non-surgical treatment options for adhesive capsulitis
- Strong candidates displayed good communication skills with the patient

Candidates performed poorly in the following areas:

- Features of adhesive capsulitis on examination
- The impact of a cancer diagnosis and associated disability on the patient's role as a mother

Other comments

- Some answers were not specific enough to be awarded marks. Weak candidates did not directly answer the questions asked.
- Responses to the questions on rehabilitation management of lymphoedema and the impact of cancer and disability on the mothering role generally lacked structure.