



ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Assessment of breastfeeding clinical skills among nursing students using the Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE)

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KEYWORDS

Breastfeeding;
OSCE;
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Abstract

Introduction: Insufficient education and training in nursing programs has led to nurses in the field knowing very little in order to assist a breastfeeding mother. Several studies recommend implementation of effective breastfeeding training in all undergraduate curricula that lead to nursing and other healthcare degrees.

Objective: To analyze the development of an objective structured clinical examination (OSCE) to measure breastfeeding clinical skills and the preliminary outcomes of its implementation.

Method: Participants for this pilot study were 23 undergraduate nursing students. The breastfeeding OSCE consisted of 10 stations where students performed different clinical skills under a simulated environment. The clinical skills being assessed in each station ranged from performing proper manual milk expression to correctly using a breast pump on a mannequin's breast. Observers in each station completed a checklist which assessed each student's clinical ability to complete that task correctly. Students conducted an evaluation of the training immediately after completing the OSCE using a structured online questionnaire.

Results: The stations with the highest score were: interventions for sore, leaking, and inverted nipples (station 4, $M=2.57$, $SD=.843$, range 1–3) and indicators of adequate latching (station 6; $M=7.09$, $SD=1.443$, range 4–8). The stations with the lowest scores were: pump set up to breast and how to remove the infant from the breast (station 1, $M=7.96$, $SD=1.745$, range 4–10), and breastfeeding positions (station 5, $M=1.65$, $SD=.714$, range 0–2).

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Conclusion: The OSCE has been positively evaluated for objectivity in student assessment and provides a 'hands on' approach to assessing clinical competence. Scores and student feedback suggests that the OSCE can be a valuable tool to be used in courses of any nursing or health-related undergraduate curriculum.

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PALABRAS CLAVE

Lactancia;
ECOE;
Estudiantes de
Enfermería;
Planes de Estudios de
Pregrado

Evaluación de las habilidades clínicas de lactancia materna entre los estudiantes de enfermería utilizando el Examen Clínico Objetivo Estructurado (ECOE)

Resumen

Introducción: Insuficiente educación y entrenamiento clínico de las enfermeras recién graduadas ha llevado a que estas no se sientan capacitadas para asistir a la madre lactante. Varios estudios recomiendan la implementación de entrenamiento de lactancia en todos los planes de estudio de pregrado que conlleven a enfermería y otros títulos en el área del cuidado de la salud.

Objetivo: Analizar el desarrollo de un examen clínico objetivo estructurado (ECOE) para medir las habilidades clínicas de lactancia materna y los resultados preliminares de su aplicación.

Método: Los participantes para este estudio piloto fueron 23 estudiantes de enfermería de pregrado. El ECOE de lactancia consistió en 10 estaciones donde los estudiantes implementaron diferentes habilidades clínicas bajo un ambiente simulado. Las habilidades clínicas examinadas en cada estación variaron desde extracción manual de leche materna hasta el correcto uso de la bomba extractora en el seno de un maniquí. Observadores en cada estación completaron una lista que juzgaba la habilidad clínica de cada estudiante para completar la tarea correctamente. Estudiantes condujeron una evaluación del entrenamiento inmediatamente después de completar el ECOE usando una encuesta estructurada en línea.

Resultados: Las estaciones con las puntuaciones más altas fueron: intervención en pezones adoloridos, goteo de leche materna de los pezones invertidos (estación 4, promedio=2.57, desviación estándar=.843, rango 1-3) e indicadores de agarre adecuado del niño al pecho materno (estación 6, promedio=7.09, desviación estándar=1.443, rango 4-8). Las estaciones con las puntuaciones más bajas fueron: cómo manejar la bomba de extracción de leche y cómo destetar al niño del pecho materno (estación 1, promedio=7.96, desviación estándar=1.745, rango 4-10) y las posiciones para la lactancia (estación 5, promedio=1.65, desviación estándar=.714, rango 0-2).

Conclusión: El ECOE ha sido evaluado positivamente por su objetividad en la evaluación de estudiantes y porque funciona adecuadamente para medir las competencias clínicas. Los puntajes y las evaluaciones de los estudiantes sugieren que el ECOE puede ser una herramienta valiosa para ser utilizada en otros cursos de enfermería o planes de estudio de pregrado relacionados con el área de salud.

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Introduction

Supporting, promoting, and protecting lactation and breastfeeding has emerged as a contemporary public health initiative.¹ Breastfeeding combines two crucial elements of infant survival: nurturing and nourishment.² Over 40 years of strong evidence acknowledges that breast milk is the ideal form of infant nutrition.^{3,4} According to the Lancet Child Survival Series, breastfeeding is ranked first among the top 15 preventative child survival interventions and it is recommended exclusively for the first 6 months.⁵

The World Health Organization (WHO)/United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) developed a Global Strategy in

2002, which serves as a framework of actions necessary to protect, support, and promote adequate feeding of all infants and children worldwide.⁶ The Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) is one out of nine targets of the Global Strategy for Infant and Child Feeding and consists of 20h of breastfeeding training based on The Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding.^{6,7} These 20h of breastfeeding training are considered by the WHO/UNICEF as the minimum time of instruction that health care workers caring for a lactating mother should receive.⁸ Maternity facilities that successfully implemented the Ten Steps and the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes are rewarded and recognized as a "Baby-Friendly" facility.⁹

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