

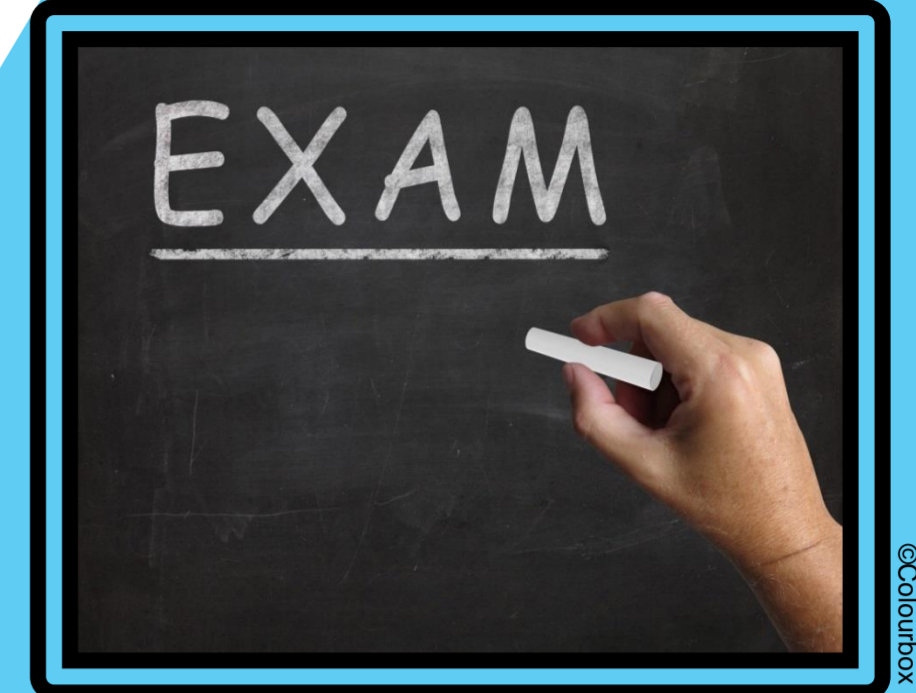
Communication Skills Assessment Methods in Nordic Pharmacy Schools

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INTRODUCTION

Nordic pharmacist-patient communication studies have shown that practice sometimes falls short when it comes to medication counseling.

Pharmacy schools should ensure students' minimum competencies in this field.

Assessment of communication skills is important both for the students' learning and the faculties' mandate¹.

Earlier studies have concluded that there is a need for more formalized assessment methods in pharmacy schools^{2,3}

This study explores the methods used in Nordic pharmacy schools' communication skills assessments according to course leaders.



“Communication skills constitute many different skills. It is very difficult to assess the students for all these skills”
(respondent 18)

CONCLUSION

Several different assessment methods were used.

However, many courses used assessment methods, which mainly assessed knowledge and/or self-reflection of clinical and/or communication skills.

Performance (practical) assessments should be used more routinely.

RESULTS

- Answers were obtained from all 11 schools pertaining to 26 of 29 identified courses.
- 0 of 11 schools assessed students' overall progression of communication skills during the education.
- 6 of 26 courses lacked summative assessment.
- Written exams were the predominant summative assessment methods used e.g. self-reflection essays (9/26;6/11), self-assessment test (5/26;3/11), theoretical knowledge exams (4/26;3/11) portfolios (1/26;1/11).
- Practical exams were less frequent e.g. dispensing tests (6/26;4/11), oral patient-case presentations (4/26;2/11), role play (2/26;2/11), OSCE (1/26;1/11).
- 5 of 26 courses provided assessment performed by people educated in communication science.
- The most frequent way of formative assessment was by university teacher (9/11) or internship tutors (7/11). Video was used by 3 of 11 schools (4/26).
- Key challenges mentioned were validity and robustness of assessment methods and time and resources for carrying out assessments.

METHODOLOGY

E-mail questionnaires were developed and distributed to the 11 Nordic pharmacy schools (master level).

Respondents were asked to include mandatory courses with an explicit focus on communication with patients.

The questionnaires contained both closed and open ended questions.

Summary of qualitative data and descriptive statistical analysis was done in NVIVO 10. and IBM SPSS Statistics 22.

Data were collected between March and November 2015.

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