

The role of daily encounter cards and a log of skills to guide learning and provide feedback to rural medical students on their anaesthetic rotation

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Ensuring students get proper formative feedback, are exposed to all elements of the anaesthetic curriculum and are correctly assessed at the end of their rotation are all critical elements for a successful clinical attachment in anaesthesia. Previously these elements, necessary to students learning, have not been well addressed. This project looks at the effect of introducing 'daily encounter cards' (DEC) and a 'log of skills' into the anaesthetic rotation for rural medical students.

Students at the Rural Clinical School spend only three weeks in the anaesthetic department. This produces a number of challenges:

- At the end of the students' rotation a clinical attachment assessment form is completed by the departmental supervisor of training (SOT). The amount of time the student has spent with the SOT or any other single member of the department during their rotation is small, making it extremely difficult to accurately complete their assessment form.
- Receiving feedback is essential to learning. Because the student is not 'supervised' during their anaesthetic rotation by any one consultant, this lack of 'ownership' makes it easy for the consultant working with the student on any particular day to 'avoid' giving the student any feedback on how they are progressing and what is expected of them.
- The anaesthetic curriculum is largely 'taught' during the clinical attachment, ie an apprentice model. Students are supervised by busy consultants and registrars who may have no knowledge of the curriculum. As the students are not attached to any one person, they can 'drift' through the rotation, unsure of what they are supposed to be achieving.

Manpower shortages in rural areas exacerbate these problems.

They are not unique to our institution. Workplace-based assessment, its role and the method by which it is carried out remains an issue in current medical education literature. Integral to this issue is the provision of feedback to the learner as part of formative or summative assessment.

Working in a pragmatic worldview paradigm, data will be collected using mixed-mode methodology to determine if the introduction of the DEC and the log of skills help to solve these problems.

It is anticipated that this project will demonstrate the usefulness of the DEC and the log of skills in addressing these deficiencies.