



ASSESSMENT; IS VIVA ACCEPTABLE?

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ABSTRACT... Introduction: Assessment results have been proved as major hallmark for the progress or regression of teaching and learning. University of Health Sciences is the examining body to assess the students of B.D.S. by four methods; MCQs, SEQs, VIVA and OSCE/OSPE. The oral examination is an important part of the practical examination that helps assess three areas which are clinical knowledge, cognitive and professional skills. **Objectives:** purpose of this study was to explore student's perspective on viva as an assessment method for subject of science of dental materials. **Study design:** cross-sectional study. **Period:** Started in November 2014 completed in December 2015. **Setting:** Questionnaire was filled by B.D.S. 2nd professional students of three dental colleges of Lahore of private sector. Sharif medical and dental college Lahore. CMH dental college Lahore. University College of medicine and dentistry. University of Lahore. **Methodology:** 120 students from three different institutions were included in this study. 30.9% of the students were boys whereas 69.1 % were girls. All students were interviewed about their choice of assessment among the routine methods of assessment; MCQ, SEQ, Viva and OSPE. **Results:** 15% of the students replied MCQ to be their first choice of assessment. SEQ was selected as first choice of assessment by 26.6% of the students. 56.6% were in the favour of OSPE whereas only 1.7 % students were in the favour of viva examination. **Conclusion:** The oral examination has intrinsic weakness of low reliability and objectivity. Structuring the viva examination can be implemented and improve viva method of assessment.

Key words: Assessment methods, practical examination, teaching and learning, viva,

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INTRODUCTION

Assessment is a procedure which is providing information to the students and teachers about the learning achievements of students. Assessment results have been proved a significant sign for the progress or regression of teaching and learning. The University of Health Sciences Lahore, is the examining body assess the students of B.D.S. by four methods. MCQs, SEQs, VIVA and OSCE/OSPE.

Oral exams are used to assess three main areas which are as follows:

- (1) Clinical knowledge (expressed as fund of knowledge; demonstration of appropriate steps in a patient work up [history and physical exam]; differential diagnosis and patient management [pre-operative, operative, and post-operative].
- (2) Cognitive processes (connected with

- thinking or conscious mental processes)¹;
- Recalling and critical thinking.
- (3) Professional/interpersonal skills²

The oral examination has intrinsic weakness of low reliability and objectivity and is also deficient in validity in terms of content sampling. Its predictive validity of professional competency, which needs problem-solving skills, is doubtful. Content analysis of the items also discovered that all the abilities tested in the viva examination could best be tested in a written examination or a structured practical or clinical examination.²

The oral examination is an important part of the practical examination. In subject of science of dental materials university of health sciences assigns 40 and 50 marks for OSPE and viva respectively.

METHODOLOGY

Sample size. 120 students.

Convenience sampling technique was used.

120 students were included in study from three different institutions. The questions were asked from all of the 120 students. All students were of B.D.S.2nd year. Out of 120 students, 37 (30.9%) were boys and 83(69.1%) girls. It was asked from every student individually, how they liked to be assessed out of the four assessment methods, MCQs, SEQs, OSPE, and viva, which were used for their assessment. Students were inquired about reason for not selecting viva as first choice.

Questionnaire

1-How you would like to be assessed out of four assessment methods

MCQs, SEQs, OSPE, Viva

2-If you don't like or like viva, write reason.

Inclusion criterion

Students who were appearing in second professional annual (ospe,viva) examination for the subject of science of dental material of three selected institutions were included.

Exclusion criteria

Detained students of previous year were excluded from the study.

RESULTS

Their best choice for assessment is given in table below.

Methods of assessment	1 st choice	
MCQ	18	15%
SEQ	32	26.6%
OSPE	68	56.6%
VIVA	2	1.66%
Total	120	

Table-I. Distribution of frequencies

Out of 120 students only two candidates (1.6%) liked oral assessment method. When they were asked that which method of assessment they didn't like, 119 students rejected viva as an assessment. Almost all the students said they don't like viva because of anxiety, fear of facing

examiners. Two students who like viva said that they can express their depth of knowledge to examiners. Both students were high achievers and having very good communication skills.

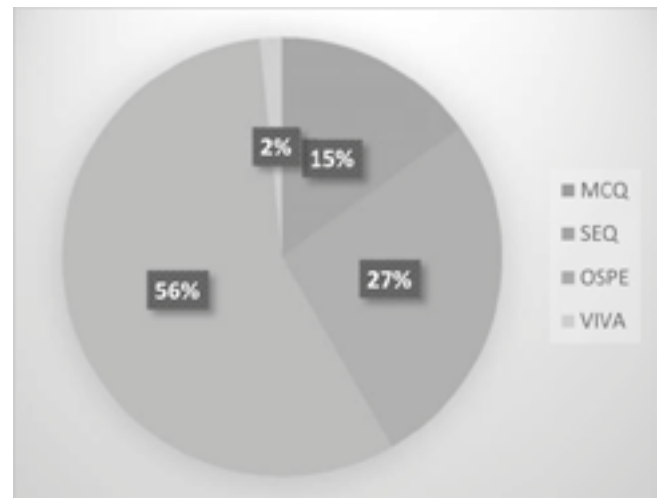


Fig-1. Distribution of frequencies in %age.

DISCUSSION

The oral assessment has a long history in the accreditation process of medical specialists. It, still, is a well-established part of assessment in a wide range of specialties in many countries but there are number of concerns (low reliability and standardization)³ regarding its use. Therefore, there has been a change in some countries away from oral assessment for postgraduate medical education. This is because of high complexity of oral assessment as an assessment tool. The oral examinations have low reliability, objectivity and are also lacking in validity in terms of content sampling.³ The criticisms for oral examinations are acceptable, only if the intentions are to produce relatively consistent results for diverse trades or professions.

Conversely, these matching features may be quite influential if anyone wants to promote diversity of student performance.

Viva will also improve the capability of the students to engage with teachers in a discussion that may prove a powerful motivation not only to learn, but also for individual students to express his ability to perform up to the standard and beyond.⁴

Oral examinations give the examiner the ample opportunity to explore students' depth of knowledge as well as their ability to express it. Oral examinations are also used for their flexibility and potential for assessment of higher cognitive skills. Oral examinations are liked because of their high face validity and their flexibility. They measure various aspects of clinical competence that cannot be assessed and evaluated in written examinations.⁵

The viva examination, being one of the traditional tools of assessment, is not properly used for achieving the desired objective of assessing knowledge particularly in pre-clinical year examinations.

This is era of innovation in healthcare system. The demands for change and innovation in the practices of learning and assessment in medical education has critically increased.⁵

Now, a number of developing innovative assessment tools are being used internationally.

For assessing integrated multidisciplinary knowledge of basic sciences, a structured clinical scenario based viva was introduced.⁵In this case, the students integrate and apply their basic sciences knowledge to answer the viva questions.

This format of viva ensures good sampling of core knowledge and objectivity of assessment and improves the validity of the examination.³

Another method is by replacing the traditional viva by structured oral examination (SOE). This can be achieved by deciding about syllabus to be covered, competencies to be measured and preparing a checklist of questions to be included in the viva. The implementation process is difficult, but once in the place, it can become an effective assessment tool.⁴

Another newly invented method is Use of Video-Projected Structured Clinical Examination

(ViPSCE) instead of the traditional oral (Viva) examination in the assessment.^{6,7}

CONCLUSION

Oral examination is not a very acceptable method from student's perspective. The traditional viva system should be improved or some more acceptable assessment tool should be implemented like structured oral examination (SOE) and video-projected structured clinical examination (ViPSCE). Many methods of the assessment other than oral examination are available to test different competencies for assessors. For example the assessment of simple knowledge no need of oral examination, it can be assessed by the written assessment methods (MCQs, SEQs, Long essay questions and etc). The selection of assessment method for a particular purpose should depend upon its relevance.

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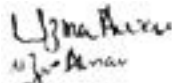
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