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Implementing Entrustable Professional Activities (EPAs) for Undergraduate Medical Education

Abstract:

Initially introduced for use in postgraduate medical education (PGME), the entrustable professional activities (EPAs) framework is increasingly being applied to undergraduate medical education (UME). Similar to PGME, the engagement and assessment of learners in the professional activities or tasks of the clinical workplace is a key component of UME. In their day-to-day practice, clinical educators balance their supervision of all learners with learner autonomy to ensure both learner engagement and safe quality patient care. Determining the appropriate balance depends on the educator's trust of the learner to complete specific tasks successfully, and acceptance of the risk associated with that trust and its potential consequences. The EPA framework for assessment utilizes the entrustment decisions made for learner engagement with specific tasks to provide information about learner competence. It takes into account future performance with unknown cases and considers learner ability in the context of learner integrity, reliability, and humility. Above all, it highlights the consequences of assessment for the patient and public in addition to the learner.

This interactive workshop will start with a brief introduction to/review of the concept of EPAs with a focus on specific considerations for implementation in UME. Examples will be provided of EPAs that have been defined for the transition from UME to PGME, including those developed by various international groups in North America and Europe. Working in small groups, participants will have the opportunity to review and adapt these exemplar EPAs for application to their home institutions. This will include mapping select EPAs to current competency frameworks and existing medical school curricula, determining benchmarks for achieving levels of supervision/entrustment, and identifying assessment opportunities. Discussion will focus on the appropriateness of exemplar EPAs, advantages and challenges of applying the EPA framework to UME, and feasibility and potential next steps for local implementation.

Workshop Objectives

- Define an entrustable professional activity (EPA)
- Review available examples of EPAs for use in participants' home institutions
- Determine benchmarks for levels of supervision/entrustment
- Identify information sources for assessment of EPAs