Investigating Program Directors' Milestones Assessment Practices in Graduate Medical Education: Preliminary Results

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INVESTIGATING PROGRAM DIRECTORS' MILESTONES ASSESSMENT PRACTICES IN GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION: PRELIMINARY RESULTS

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BACKGROUND

ACGME's Milestones assessment requirement has placed new demands on Program Directors (PDs), especially those who may not have sufficient working knowledge of assessment theories that would allow them to design useful and appropriate milestones assessments for their training curriculum.

PURPOSE

To investigate the current assessment practices as well as to identify the needs and challenges of the PDs in implementing Milestones for assessment in Graduate Medical Education at Children's Mercy Kansas City.

METHODS

This collective case study used dialogic conversation as an inquiry method to investigate the milestone assessment issues within the residency/fellowship programs in our institution.

• Data collection began January 2015 and is still in progress (7 out of 21 programs completed).

• Structured meetings with planned agendas (a preformatted template to itemize program current practices, needs, difficulties/challenges in the Milestone assessment.

• Three coders developed thematic content/cross-case analysis to increase validity (Green & Thorogood, 2005; Patton, 2002; Riessman, 2008).

• A cross-case thematic structure was built to compare coding and themes for each program, and then built up another cross-matrix thematic to identify commonalities across programs for contextual validity (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

RESULTS

All programs are using multiple methods to teach the core competencies. Similar assessment/evaluation tools are consistently being used or needed across programs (see Table 1). Both Patient Care and System Based Practice listed the high demand needs for tool development in the areas of peer, discrete task, conference assessment, non-rotation faculty assessment, and scholarly product review. The Medical Knowledge competency had only one category of common need, which is the journal club evaluation. Peer assessment and alignment improvement for a 360° evaluation were apparently the primary need when we escalated one level up to inspect the most common needs reported by programs.

PDs reported a variation of evaluation challenges that fell into five domains (see Table 2). The most common challenges were related to time management and difficulty in determining and interpreting the Milestones numbers and levels.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies</th>
<th>Common Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patient Care (PC)</td>
<td>✔ Alignment Improvement for Rotation Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Knowledge (MK)</td>
<td>✔ Journal Club Evaluation (Research Training Evaluation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systems-Based Practice (SBP)</td>
<td>✔ Alignment Improvement for Milestone Evaluation, Expert M &amp; M Evaluation (Conference Evaluation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice-Based Learning and Improvement (PBLI)</td>
<td>✔ Journal Club Evaluation (Research Training Evaluation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionalism (PROF)</td>
<td>✔ Alignment Improvement for Milestone Evaluation, Peer Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Communication Skills (ICS)</td>
<td>✔ On-Demand Evaluation (Discreet Task Assessment), Semi-annual Assessment (Non-rotation Faculty Assessment)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Program Directors' Challenges in Seven Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Directors' Challenges</th>
<th>P1</th>
<th>P2</th>
<th>P3</th>
<th>P4</th>
<th>P5</th>
<th>P6</th>
<th>P7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency, duration and intensity</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time management</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training and support</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity/Alignment</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical Competency Committee (CCC) function</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CONCLUSION

This initial data analysis provides perspectives regarding PDs' current practices/needs/challenges with Milestone assessment and identifies similarities/differences between programs. In addition to the cross-matrix analysis, it will be useful to apply the Generalized Linear Mixed Model to further examine how the Milestone assessment affects fellows' performance levels.

REFERENCES