
Future Trends in Chiropractic Education Conference on Clinical Assessment

Claire Johnson, MEd, DC, DACBSP, Southern California University of Health Sciences and National University of Health Sciences

Quality clinical education and assessment are essential to producing excellent chiropractic graduates and maintaining excellent practice skills for the private practitioner. With that in mind, a conference was developed specifically to address key issues in these areas.

On August 26 and 27, 2006 in Pasadena, Texas, participants attended a landmark conference in chiropractic education: Current Concepts in Clinical Assessment, hosted by Texas Chiropractic College (TCC). First envisioned in 2005, Drs. Alan Adams and Steve Foster, both from TCC, organized an educational conference focusing on methods to educate and assess clinical skills of chiropractic students and practitioners. Representatives from various institutions participated, including Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College, National Board of Chiropractic Examiners, NCMIC Inc., National University of Health Sciences, Northwestern Health Sciences University, Palmer College of Chiropractic (Davenport), Palmer College of Chiropractic-Florida, Southern California University of Health Sciences, and TCC.

The presenters were selected from world-renowned faculty and researchers from health sciences education programs. These multidisciplinary experts participated as speakers and workshop leaders, providing participants with a wide variety of clinical assessment strategies. Plenary presentations included the following topics and speakers (for suggested

reading from the plenary presenters, see Table 1):

- Historical Evolution of Clinical Performance Assessment Within the Health Professions—John Littlefield, PhD
- Using Standardized Patients in Health Professions Education: Current Trends—Karen Szauter, MD
- Threats to Validity of Performance Exams: What Can Go Wrong and How to Fix It—Steven Downing, PhD
- Clinical Skills Assessments: External Drivers and Internal Benefits—Delia Anderson, MS

Workshop presentations included:

- Defensible Standard Setting Methods for Performance Exams—Steven Downing, PhD
- Developing Cases for Objectively Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs)—Karen Szauter, MD
- Technical and Software Considerations for Assessment Centers—Balazs Moldovanyi, MS
- Determining Competence to Practice: The Role of Assessment Centers—Alan Adams, DC and Steve Foster, DC
- Creating and Maintaining a Standardized Patient Program: Nuts and Bolts—Delia Anderson, MS

Throughout the conference, attendees engaged in conversations and discussed the possibility of collaborative efforts in order to fortify the future of chiropractic education. A tour of the campus, including the newly established student assessment center, provided a demonstration and a source of ideas for practical applications that attendees could bring home to their own institutions. Connections were

Table 1. A Sampling of Articles Authored by Conference Presenters

Speaker	Samples of published works
Littlefield	• Littlefield JH, Darosa DA, Paukert J, Williams RG, Klamen DL, Schoolfield JD. Improving resident performance assessment data: numeric precision and narrative specificity. <i>Acad Med</i> 2005;80:489–95. • Paukert JL, Chumley-Jones HS, Littlefield JH. Do peer chart audits improve residents' performance in providing preventive care? <i>Acad Med</i> 2003;78(10 suppl):S39–41. • Littlefield JH, Hahn HB, Meyer AS. R Evaluation of a role-play learning exercise in an ambulatory clinic setting. <i>Adv Health Sci Educ Theory Pract</i> 1999;4:167–73.
Szauter	• Ainsworth MA, Szauter KM. Medical student professionalism: are we measuring the right behaviors? A comparison of professional lapses by students and physicians. <i>Acad Med</i> 2006;81(10 suppl):S83–86. • Szauter KM, Ainsworth MA, Holden MD, Mercado AC. Do students do what they write and write what they do? The match between the patient encounter and patient note. <i>Acad Med</i> 2006;81(10 suppl):S44–47. • Solomon DJ, Szauter K, Rosebraugh CJ, Callaway MR. Global ratings of student performance in a standardized patient examination: is the whole more than the sum of the parts? <i>Adv Health Sci Educ Theory Pract</i> 2000;5:131–40.
Downing	• Downing SM, Lieska NG, Raible MD. Establishing passing standards for classroom achievement tests in medical education: a comparative study of four methods. <i>Acad Med</i> 2003;78(10 suppl):S85–87. • Downing SM. Validity: on meaningful interpretation of assessment data. <i>Med Educ</i> 2003;37:830–37. • Downing SM. Item response theory: applications of modern test theory in medical education. <i>Med Educ</i> 2003;37:739–45.
Anderson	• Brown A, Anderson D, Szerlip HM. Using standardized patients to teach disease management skills to preclinical students: a pilot project. <i>Teach Learn Med</i> 2003;15:84–87. • Saketkoo L, Anderson D, Rice J, Rogan A, Lazarus CJ. Effects of a disability awareness and skills training workshop on senior medical students as assessed with self ratings and performance on a standardized patient case. <i>Teach Learn Med</i> 2004;16:345–54.

established in which attendees will continue to work independently and collaboratively from a distance. Both Drs. Adams and Foster stated that they hoped

future meetings, such as this one, will continue to strengthen the quality of clinical assessment and training in chiropractic education.