

# Perception of Dental Students Towards the Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE)

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ABSTRACT

**Citation: Enabulele JE, Akhigbemen O. Perception of Dental Students Towards the Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE). Nig J Dent Sci; 7(1):c1-c2.**

## INTRODUCTION

In order to ascertain whether students are meeting the objectives set forth for the specific courses and programs, assessments are crucial. While it would be great to have an evaluation tool that fits every one of the five criteria listed by Van der Vleuen (1996), it is typically challenging to find an instrument that meets these criteria. These requirements include; Validity, Reliability, Impact on the learner/educational program, acceptability, and practicality (including cost efficiency). The methods for evaluation have progressed from simple pen-and-paper tests to more sophisticated strategies like the objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE).

OSCEs are widely considered to be a reliable form of assessment (Pell et al., 2010) and has become one of the most widely used methods of assessing clinical competency in healthcare education (Newble, 2004). The OSCEs are designed with the idea that all candidates would be given identical clinical tasks to complete in the same amount of time, and their scores will be determined by standardized marking schemes (Harden &

Gleeson, 2000). The objective of the study was to evaluate the perception of clinical dental students towards Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE).

## METHODS

This was a cross-sectional study of clinical dental students. A self-administered questionnaire comprising of two sections; sociodemographic characteristics and perception of the respondents towards OSCE was used to gather data for the study. Data obtained was analyzed using IBM SPSS version 26.0. The analysis was done using frequency distribution and cross-tabulations. Chi-square was used to test for level of significance.  $P < 0.05$  was considered statistically significant.

## RESULTS

A total of 68 respondents were enrolled for the study consisting of predominantly male students (69.1%) with a male female ratio of 1:0.45. More than half (55.9%) of the respondents were 21-25 years old. Majority (98.4%) were aware of OSCE as a mode of examination with 41.2% describing

correctly what OSCE entails, while 39.7% had an idea of what OSCE involves. The number of OSCEs the respondents have been exposed to ranges from 1 to 9 with a mean of  $3.28 \pm 1.7$ . The majority (73.5%) of the respondents found OSCE as an acceptable mode of assessment for clinical and practical components of the examination.

There was a statistically significant association between the level of study as well as knowledge of what OSCE entails and exposure to OSCE as a form of examination ( $P < 0.0001$ ) with an increase in exposure to OSCE with increasing level of study. A higher proportion of those who had been exposed to OSCE as a form of assessment knew or had an idea as to what OSCE entails.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Clinical dental students appear to find the OSCE to be a valid assessment tool but regular education about OSCE to dental students are necessary.

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