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An experimental study looking at whether the medical student's non-native English accent affects the examiner's scoring during an objective structured clinical examination (OSCE)

Submission date
14/04/2020

Recruitment status
No longer recruiting

Registration date
15/04/2020

Overall study status
Completed

Last Edited
06/10/2020

Condition category
Other

[_] Prospectively registered
[_] Protocol
[_] Statistical analysis plan
[X] Results
[_] Individual participant data

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims
Assessment of clinical competence is an important aspect of the assessment in medical education. Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) is an assessment tool commonly used for such purpose. In an OSCE, medical students rotate through a set number of stations. In one station, there is typically one examiner who observes the student. There may be a simulated /real patient, a manikin, relevant equipment or clinical information. Each time a student enters a station, he/she is given a scenario with a task to complete, including practical procedures or patient managements. Students' performance is marked by the examiner using a checklist or rating scale. It is stated OSCEs are superior to other assessment methods such as written examination or long cases due to the high construct validity, the standardised cases and marking schemes.
OSCEs need to produce reliable measurements of the students' competence. It is imperative to monitor the standard and quality of the OSCE examiners. Minimising the examiner bias ensures that the difference in the scores is due to the students' performance. Despite the implementation of the examiner training, a systematic review has described that OSCEs were highly variable in their reliability. There have been anecdotes that students with non-native English accents (NNEAs) were marked lower than those with native English accents (NEAs). No medical education research has investigated the effect of accents in an OSCE. Therefore, it is important to establish whether such bias exists.
Thus, the primary objective of this study was to test a hypothesis that OSCE examiners scored students with NNEAs lower compared to students with NEAs when the performance is constant.

Who can participate?
OSCE examiners in the UK who have had formal OSCE examiner training.

What does the study involve?
A professional actor will play a medical student. Two near identical scripts will be prepared. Two videos are made showing the actor speaking with an Indian accent and two videos are made

showing the actor speaking without the accent in either script. UK OSCE examiners will be recruited online and randomly assigned to two groups. They will watch two videos online, each with either script, with and without the Non-Native English Accent. For each video performance, examiners will be asked to give an individual score to each checklist item and a global score.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?
None

Where is the study run from?
Queen Mary University of London, Centre for Medical Education, Institute of Health Sciences Education (UK)

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?
March 2019 to April 2019

Who is funding the study?
Queen Mary University of London, Centre for Medical Education, Institute of Health Sciences Education (UK)

Who is the main contact?
An Kozato, a.kozato@smd15.qmul.ac.uk

Contact information

Type(s)
Public

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Additional identifiers

Clinical Trials Information System (CTIS)
Nil known

ClinicalTrials.gov (NCT)

Nil known

Protocol serial number
Nil known

Study information

Scientific Title
A randomised controlled trial of the influence of non-native English accents on examiners' scores in OSCEs

Study objectives
OSCE examiners score students with non-native English accents lower compared to students with native English accents when the performance is constant.

Ethics approval required
Old ethics approval format

Ethics approval(s)
Approved 19/02/2019, Queen Mary Ethics of Research Committee (Room W104, Queen's Building, Queen Mary University of London, Mile End Road, London, E1 4NS, UK; +44(0)20 7882 7915; h.covill@qmul.ac.uk), ref: QMERC2018/95

Study design
Interventional randomized single-blinded controlled trial

Primary study design
Interventional

Study type(s)
Other

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied
Undergraduate medical education and clinical skills assessment.

Interventions
Four videos of one mock OSCE station will be produced. A professional actor plays a medical student. Two near-identical scripts are prepared. Two videos show the actor speaking with an Indian accent and two videos show the actor speaking without the accent in either script. UK OSCE examiners will be recruited online and randomly assigned to two groups. They will watch two videos online, each with either script, with and without the Non-Native English Accent.

For each video performance, examiners will be asked to give an individual score to each checklist item and a global score.

Randomisation: alternating group number allocated in the order the consent forms are received.

Intervention Type
Other

Primary outcome(s)
Global scores and individual item scores given by the OSCE examiners at the time of watching the video.

Key secondary outcome(s))
None

Completion date
30/04/2019

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria
OSCE examiners in the UK who have had formal OSCE examiner training

Participant type(s)
Health professional

Healthy volunteers allowed
No

Age group
Adult

Sex
All

Total final enrolment
42

Key exclusion criteria
Does not meet inclusion criteria

Date of first enrolment
13/03/2019

Date of final enrolment
27/03/2019

Locations

Countries of recruitment
United Kingdom

England

Study participating centre

Queen Mary University of London
Centre for Medical Education, Insititute of Health Sciences Education
Barts and The London School of Medicine & Dentistry
Garrod Building
Turner Street
London
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Sponsor information

Organisation
Queen Mary University of London

ROR
https://ror.org/026zzn846

Funder(s)

Funder type
University/education

Funder Name
Queen Mary University of London, Centre for Medical Education, Insititute of Health Sciences Education

Alternative Name(s)
Queen Mary Uni of London, Queen Mary, Queen Mary and Westfield College, The London Hospital Medical College, St Bartholomew's Hospital Medical College, Westfield College, East London College/Queen Mary College, QMUL, QM

Funding Body Type
Government organisation

Funding Body Subtype
Universities (academic only)

Location
United Kingdom

Results and Publications

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan

The datasets generated during and/or analysed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request from An Kozato, a.kozato@smd15.qmul.ac.uk , type of data will be the anonymised participants' raw data. The data will become available upon the request. The raw data will only be made available for the purpose of academic research and the request shall be made to the author directly. Consent regarding the use of personal data has been obtained from participants under the condition of any identifiable information to be removed. The participants are assigned a numerical ID and any identifiable information such as personal contact information will be removed from the raw data.

IPD sharing plan summary

Available on request

Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
Results article	results	15/08/2020	06/10/2020	Yes	No
Participant information sheet	Participant information sheet	11/11/2025	11/11/2025	No	Yes