

KEY FEATURES ITEMS IN ASSESSMENT

Farmer EA¹ and Page GG²

¹ University of Wollongong, NSW Australia ²University of British Columbia Canada

Overview

Clinical educators at all levels of education face the challenge of developing practical and reliable written examinations that measure important skills and have a desired educational impact. As part of the 'tool box' of written examination formats, 'key features' problems (KFP) have been developed to assess clinical decision-making skills (1,2). This problem format was developed to model the way in which competent clinicians make clinical decisions, and to maximize the required validity and reliability to assess these skills. For the past decade, KFP have been successfully used as components of licensing, fellowship and specialty self-assessment examinations in Canada, Australia, the USA, and other countries. The principles underlying the development of KFP examinations are universally valid for other forms of written (e.g., MCQ or MEQ) and clinical (e.g., OSCE) examinations.

Objectives

Participants will be able to:

1. Define a KFP, and describe its characteristics.
2. Identify the measurement issues underlying the development of KFP examinations;
3. Understand how KFP examination development is guided by our knowledge of:
 - a) Clinical decision-making, and
 - b) Reliable and valid assessments of clinical decision-making skills.
4. Define a clinical problem's key feature(s), and how to create quality questions
5. Describe how the RACGP and MCC implement KFP examinations

Participants will receive model KFP questions and answers for reference.

References

1. Page, G. Bordage, G. and Allen, T. "Developing Key Features Problems and Examinations to Assess Clinical Decision-Making Skills", Academic Medicine, 70:3, 1995, 194-201.
2. Farmer, EA Page, G., A practical guide to assessing clinical decision-making using the key features approach, Medical Education. 39: 1188-94, 2005.