Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) to ensure nursing graduates' practice skills

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To ensure that nursing students have obtained certain nursing practice skills before their graduation, the Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) was developed and implemented to assess fourth year students' practice skills. The objectives were to: 1) address the competency practice nursing testing among the fourth year nursing students before they graduated; 2) determine the outcomes in the professional skill domain and the emergency nursing skills; 3) evaluate the satisfaction with the OSCE design.

The examination is composed of fundamental nursing procedures and clinical nursing areas. Each student had to demonstrate that she could complete the following nursing procedures correctly and skillfully: catheterization with oxygenation care, dressing care, blood with intravenous fluid care and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). The six clinical nursing situations included: 1) adult and geriatric nursing, 2) basic medical primary care, 3) pediatric nursing, 4) maternity and child nursing, 5) psychiatric nursing, and 6) emergency medical service nursing. Under each specific clinical situation, the students were assessed with reference to their decision making skill, priority setting, and moral and ethical skills as professional nursing.

It was found that the students did well on preparing equipment for the required procedures and the assessment of clients, and had confidence in making professional relationships with the health team as well as in clinical decision making. Seventy-five percent of the students performed very well on the procedures. All nursing students could be outstanding with decision making to CPR competency in emergency nursing skill. Despite the lengthy amount of time was required for the OSCE, the students and instructors' satisfaction with OSCE design were at high level.