Reviewer’s report

Title: Assessment of clinical competencies using clinical images and videos

Version: 3 Date: 28 January 2013

Reviewer: Stuart Haines

Reviewer’s report:

Thank you for allowing me to review your manuscript and provide constructive comments for improvement. The CIVA is an intriguing assessment method and appears to be a useful complement to other strategies to assess student performance. While the close correlation between student performance on the CIVA and OSCE suggests that they assess similar cognitive abilities, other factors may have also influenced the results. More details are needed with regard to the development of the CIVA and other assessments in order for readers to draw their own conclusions (and replicate the method).

Major Compulsory Revisions

METHODS

1. Additional details regarding the CIVA development process is needed. Who are members of the “Clinical Skills” team? Is this team also responsible for the development and implementation of other assessments in the curriculum (e.g. OSCE, DOCEE, and written exams)? Do all of the assessment in the curriculum follow a similar blue print? If so, in what ways are they similar (and dissimilar)? When was the CIVA administered in relationship to the other assessments in your curriculum? Where items included on the CIVA pilot tested or validated in any way prior to being administered to students? If so, please describe the process.

2. Please describe the other assessments (OSCE, DOCEE, and written exam) in a bit more detail. Is the “written exam” a single exam or a serious of exams? Was the written exam a multiple-choice examination or essay? When were these assessments administered to students and under what circumstances? What content was included on the written exam? What skills were tested or observed on the OSCE and DOCEE?

3. How are the CIVA items scored? Who scores them? What criteria are used to determine the student’s score on each item? Is more than one person involved in scoring an item? How are differences in raters managed? Are all items on the CIVA scored equally or are some items given more weight than others?

4. Methods, Paragraph 3. Questionnaire. Please describe the survey instrument administered to students in a bit more detail. How many items were included on the questionnaire? Please include a short summary of what each item asked. What were the “anchors” for each of the points on the 5-point Likert scale?
RESULTS

5. Work load is considered a primary advance of administering this type of assessment when compared to OSCE. However, no data is provided. How much time is required to develop a CIVA item? How much time is required to administer the assessment? How many proctors are required during the assessment? How long does it take to score the assessment (time per item, time per student per item)?

DISCUSSION

6. Are the items included on the CIVA similar to the OSCE stations? While I agree that a typical OSCE assesses clinical reasoning and decision making in a similar manner to the CIVA, the high correlation between to these two methods may also be due to a priming effect. If the content of one assessment is quite similar to the content of the other assessment (and each is administered in close temporal proximity to one another), this could easily explain the high correction between the two assessments. In other words, the assessment construct AND the content of the two assessments were similar and thus students performed similarly on them.

Minor Essential Revisions

Discussion, Paragraph 2. The phrase “epileptic fits” is inappropriate and insensitive. Please use the term “seizures” or “status epilepticus” instead.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.