



RECS Preceptor Press



April 2019

Direct Observation

Background

Direct observation of trainee performance is essential to the evaluation of clinical skills and is now required by the ACGME and LCME.

Benefit

Increases frequency of feedback provided; appropriate feedback improves performance of medical trainees

** Studies have shown that preceptors felt direct observation provided them with information they would not have obtained otherwise*



How

The Structured Clinical Observation (SCO)

Evaluates skills in:

1. History taking
2. Physical examination
3. Interpersonal communication skills

Enter the patient room at some point during the clinical encounter and remain silent while observing behaviors outlined on a checklist.

** You do not need to be in a room longer than 3-5 min, nor do you have to observe an encounter from start to finish.*

Feedback

Give immediate feedback after the direct observation but limit it to 1 or 2 points. Can point out something the learner did well and something they need to improve on. And remember... observe the behavior (speech or action) — not the person.



REMINDERS: Your semi-annual evaluation of your resident is due NOW! Please fill out on New Innovations or on paper and fax back.

1. Evaluations are due back within 2 weeks of being requested
2. You should hear from a Chief and/or an Associate Program Director if your resident will not be attending clinic
3. Your resident should not stay in clinic past 6pm
4. It is an ACGME requirement that your resident attend 26 weeks of clinic and 36 half day sessions per academic year and the average # of patients per session should be:

PGY-1: 3

PGY-2: 4

PGY-3: 5

[Click here to see an Observed Encounter Checklist \(can download/print\)](#)

References:

1. Dattner L and Lopreiato J. Introduction of a Direct Observation Program Into a Pediatric Resident Continuity Clinic: Feasibility, Acceptability, and Effect on Resident Feedback. *Teaching and Learning in Medicine*, 22:4; 280-286.
2. Hamburger EK et al. Observation of Resident Clinical Skills: Outcomes of a Program of Direct Observation in the Continuity Clinic Setting. *Academic Pediatrics*, 11:5, 394-402.

Go to: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/JMWJQMN> to fill out an evaluation on this edition of the Preceptor Press (this will verify you have read this edition).

To access previous issues of The Preceptor Press, go to:

https://www.akronchildrens.org/pages/Continuity-Clinic-RECS-Learning-Modules.html#tab_sctabtwo

Clinical Pearl: Routinize direct observation in your practice. Make direct observation a regular daily occurrence in your teaching practice. Further develop your observational skills by helping the student develop his or hers. For example, ask the student to observe something you are doing and then describe it to you.

Adapted from: Hauer KE, Holmboe ES, Kogan JR. (2011). Twelve tips for implementing tools for direct observation of medical trainees' clinical skills during patient encounters. Medical Teacher, 33(1), 27-33.