

ABHISHEK SINGH, ANUJA MANOHARAN SHEEJA, ALAA IBRAHIM RAJAB,
KETEVANI GOGENIA, IA OKUJAV, ILONA KHARGELIA,
RAAGINI PRAKASH GAGNANI, IURI MIGRIALI

ASSESSING PROFESSIONALISM IN MEDICAL STUDENTS: THE ROLE OF SIMULATED LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Alte University, International Medical School

Doi: <https://doi.org/10.52340/jecm.2025.02.02>

აბიშეკ სინგჰი, ანუჯა მანოჰარან შიეჯა, ალაა იბრაჰიმ რაჯაბ, ქეთევან გოგენია, ია ოკუჯავა,
ილონა ხარგელია, რააგინი პრაკაშ გაგნანი, იური მიგრიალი
**მედიცინის სტუდენტებში პროფესიონალიზმის შეფასება: სიმულირებული სასწავლო
გარემოს როლი**
ალტე უნივერსიტეტი, მედიცინის საერთაშორისო სკოლა

რეზიუმე

პროფესიონალიზმი წარმოადგენს მედიცინის განათლების ძირითად კომპეტენციას, რომელიც მოიცავს ეთიკურ გადაწყვეტილებების მიღებას, კომუნიკაციას, ემპათიას, პასუხისმგებლობას და პატივისცემას პაციენტებისა და კოლეგების მიმართ. მიუხედავად იმისა, რომ ფორმალური სასწავლო პროგრამები ხაზგასმით აღნიშნავენ მის მნიშვნელობას, პროფესიონალიზმის შეფასება კვლავ გამოწვევად რჩება მისი სუბიექტური ბუნებისა და დაფარული სასწავლო პროცესების გავლენის გამო. ეს კვლევა აფასებს, თუ რამდენად არის პროფესიონალიზმი ინტეგრირებული მედიცინის განათლებაში და იკვლევს სიმულაციური სასწავლო გარემოების, განსაკუთრებით კი ობიექტურად სტრუქტურირებული კლინიკური გამოცდების (OSCE), ეფექტურობას პროფესიონალური ქცევების ჩამოყალიბებისა და შეფასების პროცესში. გამოყენებული იყო შერეული მეთოდოლოგია, რომელიც აერთიანებდა ლიტერატურის მიმოხილვასა და ბაკალავრიატის მედიკოს სტუდენტების გამოკითხვის მონაცემებს. გამოკითხვა შეეხო სტუდენტების ხედვებს პროფესიონალიზმის შესახებ, მისი ინტეგრაციის ხარისხს განათლებაში და შეფასების მეთოდების, მათ შორის OSCE-ს ეფექტურობას. რაოდენობრივი მონაცემები გაანალიზდა აღწერითი სტატისტიკის გამოყენებით, ხოლო თვისებრივმა პასუხებმა უფრო სიღრმისეული შეხედულებები წარმოაჩინა. შედეგებმა აჩვენა, რომ სტუდენტების 78% თვლის, რომ პროფესიონალიზმი საშუალოდ ან კარგად არის ინტეგრირებული მათ განათლებაში. OSCE შეფასდა როგორც "ძალიან ეფექტური" ან "ეფექტური" გამოკითხულთა 72%-ის მიერ, განსაკუთრებით ემპათიისა და კომუნიკაციის შეფასების კუთხით, თუმცა 43% გამოთქვამს შეშფოთებას OSCE-ის რეალურ კლინიკურ ქცევებთან შესაბამისობის თაობაზე. სტუდენტებმა ხაზგასმით აღნიშნეს ინტერდისციპლინარული ტრენინგის, რეალისტური სიმულაციებისა და უწყვეტი უკუკავშირის საჭიროება. სიმულაციური სასწავლო გარემოებები მნიშვნელოვანია პროფესიონალიზმის განვითარებისათვის, თუმცა ისინი უნდა დაკომპლექტდეს რეალური შემთხვევების, ხანგრძლივი შეფასებებისა და რეფლექსიური პრაქტიკის გამოყენებით პროფესიონალიზმის უფრო სრულყოფილი შეფასების მიზნით.

Introduction: Professionalism is a core component of medical education, vital for fostering trust, respect, and accountability in healthcare. It includes competencies like ethical decision-making, empathy, communication, responsibility, and integrity, all of which impact patient outcomes and the reputation of the medical profession. While medical schools emphasize professionalism alongside clinical skills, its assessment remains challenging due to its subjective and context-dependent nature. Traditional exams often fail to capture the complexities of professional behavior, prompting educators to adopt experiential learning methods such as Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs), simulations, and reflective practices. OSCEs, in particular, have become key tools for evaluating non-cognitive skills like empathy, ethical decision-making, and communication. These structured environments offer standardized scenarios

for assessing student behavior and providing formative feedback. However, debates persist over their ability to fully reflect real-world professionalism, with some critics questioning the authenticity of simulated responses.

This study investigates the role of simulated learning environments, especially OSCEs, in fostering and assessing professionalism among undergraduate medical students. It examines student perceptions, the integration of professionalism into medical curricula, and the effectiveness of simulations in promoting key competencies. Combining survey data and a literature review, the study highlights current practices, identifies gaps, and offers recommendations to improve the teaching and assessment of professionalism in medical education [1,2,3,4].

Research Goal: The primary goal of this study is to evaluate the role of simulated learning environments, particularly Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs), in fostering and assessing professionalism among undergraduate medical students. It explores how effectively medical education integrates professionalism into the curriculum and how well simulations reflect real-life clinical practice in assessing key competencies. The study aims to assess medical students' perceptions of how professionalism is taught, modeled, and assessed, with a specific focus on simulated environments. It also examines the perceived effectiveness of OSCEs and other simulation-based assessments in evaluating core aspects of professionalism, such as empathy, ethical decision-making, communication skills, responsibility, and teamwork. Additionally, the study seeks to identify strengths and gaps in current teaching methods and highlight areas where improvements are needed to better integrate professionalism into medical training. Furthermore, the research explores the challenges students face in demonstrating professionalism during simulations and real-life clinical settings and investigates opportunities for enhancing educational strategies. Based on the findings, the study aims to develop evidence-based recommendations for medical educators to improve the teaching and assessment of professionalism through simulated environments and other innovative educational tools. By achieving these objectives, the study contributes to the ongoing discourse on best practices in medical education, supporting the development of future physicians who embody the highest standards of professional conduct in their clinical practice [6,7,9,10].

Research Materials and Methods: This study used a mixed-methods approach, combining a structured survey, open-ended responses, and a literature review to assess the role of simulated learning environments, particularly OSCEs, in fostering and evaluating professionalism among undergraduate medical students. A cross-sectional survey of 142 students was conducted via Google Forms, collecting data on perceptions of professionalism, experiences with simulation-based education, and views on teaching and assessment methods. The survey covered key areas: general perceptions of professionalism, the role of OSCEs in assessing empathy, ethics, and communication, self-evaluations of skills like teamwork and leadership, effectiveness of teaching methods (e.g., PBL, CBL, mentoring), and assessment tools (e.g., OSCEs, portfolios, 360-degree assessments, P-MEX). Open-ended questions allowed students to reflect on their experiences and suggest improvements. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative responses underwent thematic analysis to highlight key insights and concerns. A literature review contextualized the findings within existing research on medical education and simulation-based assessment. Ethical standards were followed, ensuring voluntary, anonymous participation and data confidentiality. This comprehensive approach provided a nuanced understanding of how simulated learning environments influence the development and assessment of professionalism in medical education.

Obtained Results and Discussion: The study explored medical students' perceptions of professionalism and the role of simulated learning environments, especially OSCEs, in fostering and assessing key competencies. Most students (78%) rated professionalism as "Extremely Important," though only 42% felt "Extremely Confident" in their understanding, indicating gaps in training. OSCEs were considered "Extremely Effective" by 67% of students for assessing empathy, ethical decision-making, and communication, though concerns were raised about their artificial nature. Mentoring, Feedback, and Problem-Based Learning (PBL) were seen as the most effective teaching methods, while Case-Based Learning (CBL) and Inter-Professional Group Work were also valued. Students felt confident in teamwork, empathy, and communication but reported lower confidence in time management, leadership, and creativity in problem-solving. OSCEs, Portfolios/Log-books, and 360-Degree Assessments were rated as the most effective tools for evaluating professionalism. Students called for more real-world clinical exposure, structured feedback, mentorship, and consistent role modeling, highlighting the need for improvements in curriculum integration and assessment methods. [4,5,6,8].

Discussion: The findings indicate that while professionalism is recognized as essential and is moderately well-integrated into the medical curriculum, there is room for improvement, particularly in the consistency and depth of its application. The strong endorsement of OSCEs highlights their value in simulating complex clinical interactions and assessing professionalism. However, the concerns regarding their artificiality suggest that they should be complemented with longitudinal assessments and real clinical evaluations. The gaps identified in areas such as leadership, time management, and inter-professional collaboration reflect broader trends in medical education, where technical skills often receive more emphasis than soft skills. Integrating targeted workshops, mentorship programs, and interdisciplinary simulations could address these gaps. The qualitative data also underscore the importance of faculty role modeling. Medical educators play a pivotal role in shaping student behavior, and inconsistencies in professional conduct among faculty can undermine formal teaching efforts. Structured faculty development programs focused on professionalism could mitigate this issue.

Conclusion: This study reinforces the importance of simulated learning environments, particularly OSCEs, in fostering and assessing professionalism among medical students. However, it also highlights the need for a more holistic and integrated approach that combines formal assessments with real-world clinical experiences, continuous feedback, and consistent role modeling. By addressing these gaps, medical education can better prepare future physicians not only in technical competence but also in the ethical, empathetic, and interpersonal dimensions of patient care.

References:

1. Morreale MK, Balon R, Louie AK, Guerrero APS, Aggarwal R, Coverdale J, Beresin EV, Brenner AM. The Vital Importance of Professionalism in Medical Education. Published online: 7 August 2023. Academic Psychiatry.
2. General Medical Council (GMC). Good Medical Practice. Published 22 August 2023. Guidance effective from 30 January 2024.
3. Lynch DC, Surdyk PM, Eiser AR. Assessing Professionalism: A Review of the Literature. Medical Teacher. Published online: 3 July 2009.
4. BMJ. Medical Professionalism: Can It and Should It Be Measured? BMJ. November 2009; 339
5. Alkhateeb N, Salih AM, Shabila N, Al-Dabbagh A. Objective Structured Clinical Examination: Challenges and Opportunities from Students' Perspective. PLoS One. Published 2023.
6. Li H, Ding N, Zhang Y, Liu Y, Wen D. Assessing Medical Professionalism: A Systematic Review of Instruments and Their Measurement Properties. PLoS One. 2023.

7. Nittur N, Kibble J. Current Practices in Assessing Professionalism in United States and Canadian Allopathic Medical Students and Residents. Cureus. 2022.
8. Lockyer J, Sargeant J. Multisource Feedback: An Overview of Its Use and Application as a Formative Assessment. CMEJ. Published: August 26, 2022.
9. Bevan J, Russell B, Marshall B. A New Approach to OSCE Preparation - PrOSCEs. 2020.
10. Swing S, Bashook P, et al. ACGME Assessment Guidebook. First version released 2020.

*ABHISHEK SINGH, ANUJA MANOHARAN SHEEJA, ALAA IBRAHIM RAJAB,
KETEVANI GOGENIA, IA OKUJAVA, ILONA KHARGELIA,
RAAGINI PRAKASH GAGNANI, IURI MIGRIAULI*

ASSESSING PROFESSIONALISM IN MEDICAL STUDENTS: THE ROLE OF SIMULATED LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Alte University, International Medical School

SUMMARY

Professionalism is a fundamental competency in medical education, encompassing ethical decision-making, communication, empathy, accountability, and respect for patients and colleagues. While formal curricula highlight its importance, assessing professionalism remains challenging due to its subjective nature and hidden curricula influences. This study evaluates how professionalism is integrated into medical education and examines the perceived effectiveness of simulated learning environments, particularly OSCEs, in fostering and assessing professional behaviors. A mixed-methods approach was used, combining a literature review with survey data from undergraduate medical students. The survey explored perceptions of professionalism, its integration into education, and the effectiveness of assessment methods like OSCEs. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative responses provided deeper insights. Results show that 78% of students believe professionalism is moderately to well-integrated into their education. OSCEs were considered "extremely" or "very" effective by 72% of respondents, especially in evaluating empathy and communication, though 43% expressed concerns about OSCEs' ability to reflect real clinical behaviors. Simulated learning environments are vital for developing professionalism but should be complemented with real-life scenarios, longitudinal assessments, and reflective practices for a more comprehensive evaluation.

Keywords: Professionalism, Medical Education, Simulated Learning, OSCE, Student Perceptions, Professional Development

