

Quality Control: Establishing and Maintaining SP reliability

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Goals for Today's Web-seminar

- Briefly define **Reliability** and discuss how it applies to SP assessments
- Discuss **strategies for operationally enhancing SP reliability** at the various phases of preparation for an SP-based exam

Design/execution of the psychometrics themselves is beyond the scope of this presentation

What do we mean by Reliability?

- Reproducibility, consistency or stability of scores obtained across different trials or tests
- Scores = true score + measurement error
- Goal is to reduce measurement error so that most of the variance reflects actual differences between students
- If your exam isn't reliable, it won't be valid

Reliability of What?

- Portrayal: Predictable consistency within and between SP performances
- Ratings: Predictable consistency when completing checklist/rating scale(s)
- Feedback: Predictable consistency with format of feedback

It all begins with Case Design

- Write clearly and for non-medical people
- Avoid medical jargon in SP materials
- Provide sufficient background
- Omit minutia and non-essential negatives
- Organize materials in order of importance to patient

Design of Measurement Instrument

- Write items clearly
- Use items that minimize need for judgment
- Remove multiple items or stipulate whether they require *either* or *both* parts
- Include SP response in History Items
- Include minimum acceptable in PE items
- Organize in expected order

More on Measurement Instrument

- Limit total number of items
- Base items on measurable behaviors
- Create clear descriptors/criteria for rating scales points
- Avoid distracters, e.g. score totaling

Helpful Tips: Design

- Detailed *Guide to the Checklist* – do not skimp here
- Purposeful errors (e.g. minor typo) in non-critical area of materials
- Cover as many contingencies ahead of time, **in writing**, as practical

Getting Ready for Training

- Thorough notes for SPs on the case background
- *Guide to the Checklist* along plus checklists/scales
- Send in advance?
 - When to do this and when not to
 - SPs expected to be familiar with case at 1st Training
- Appropriate casting:
 - SPs who “fit” with case and with each other
 - SPs who understand the need for consistency

First Training

- Review and discuss facts of case
- Review and discuss checklist items
- Role play (multiple) with discussion
- Have SPs not role-playing practice scoring
- Goal is integration of portrayal and scoring
- Keep notes from session

Second Training (or Dry Run)

- Answer questions
- Brief recap of previous session
- Role playing: All SPs
- Practice, practice, practice
- Use participation of *blinded* outside examiner
- When not performing, SPs observe and complete checklists
- Compare checklists and resolve differences

Helpful Tips: Training

- Include experienced SPs with novices– the experienced help the inexperienced
- Create a safe environment
- Encourage questions
- Foster ownership of role
- Emphasize participant interaction throughout
- Be **thorough**: Leave as little as possible for independent interpretation

More Training Tips:

- Model the behaviors/words/actions you want
- If not sure **all** have it, re-address it
- Be gentle yet clear and unambiguous
- Be liberal with praise
- Set expectations high (rarely disappointed!)
- Instill confidence by expressing faith in their abilities

Performance During Event

- Tune-up case and checklist
 - Answer questions
 - Review key items
 - Clarify card presentation
 - Observe/approve simulated findings
 - Discuss how to handle errors
- Shadow Observers/Back-up SPs
- Use of observer form with clear procedure

More on Performance During Event

- Periodic trainer monitoring: spot check of performance and checklist (real time, pref.)
- Provide feedback early and as often as practical
- Debrief SPs immediately after
- Keep notes on everything
- Consider using SP Report Cards

Helpful Tips: Performance

- Paired, interchangeable SP & rater
- Swap SP & rater periodically
- Relieve SPs with shadow/back-up SP
- Check in with SPs on break
- Remove and tweak SPs if needed

Comments/Questions?