

Many Programs, Many Ways: Evaluating the Implementation of Competence Committees at a Canadian University

 Anita Acai, Karen Saperson,
Moyez Ladhani, &
Sharon Cameron

INTRO

- Competence committees (CCs) are increasingly being recognized as an important component of competency-based medical education (CBME)
- However, the overall quality of operationalizing CC activities in the Canadian context is not well understood
- The objective of this program evaluation study was to survey postgraduate training programs at a Canadian university about whether they have implemented CCs, and if so, to measure and describe specific practices with respect to their operations

METHODS

- An electronic survey was distributed to all CC chairs at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada
- The survey consisted of 35 multiple-choice and open-ended response options and was developed by a team of clinicians and education scientists
- Responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics and qualitative content analysis
- In addition to the survey, a PhD student trained in health professions education research observed 6 CCs across the university, taking detailed notes throughout the process



With competency-based medical education still in its infancy, competence committees appear to be grappling with larger questions around implementation rather than the nuances of the decision-making process.



Learn more about CBME at
McMaster University.

RESULTS

- Survey responses were received from 15 programs, both small- and mid-sized, of which 14 (93%) reported having a CC
- The majority of CCs were very new: 7 (50%) began in 2018 and 3 (21%) in 2019
- Although not an exhaustive list, the findings largely centred on five key areas: academic coaches, data sharing, member workload, engagement, and educational plans and remediation
- Despite some similarities across programs, such as difficult engaging residents and faculty in the assessment process, the survey and observations revealed considerable variability across programs in terms of CC implementation
- For example, while 11 (79%) of CCs reported having an academic coaching system in place, the specifics of which faculty served as academic coaches and how they interfaced with the CC differed across programs
- There was also variability in the electronic platforms used for data sharing among CC members, as well as in the extent to which CCs felt it was their role to develop versus oversee educational and remediation plans for residents

DISCUSSION

- With CBME still in its infancy, CCs appear to be grappling with larger questions around implementation (e.g., obtaining a sufficient amount of data on which to base judgments) rather than the nuances of the decision-making processes (e.g., preventing group bias)
- The results of this program evaluation study have been shared with relevant stakeholders and will be used in the preparation of a guidebook on effective CC implementation