Reinforcing Skills of the Novice Surgeon through Online Learning, Video Recording, and Self-Assessment

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OVERVIEW
An unprecedented shift continues to limit the amount of hands-on opportunities medical students have to engage, practice, and master technical skills (Drosdek et al., 2013). Unfortunately, due to various barriers, there may be some medical students who complete their third year with significant gaps in technical proficiency. Thus, hands-on opportunities and ample resources must be integrated to allow medical students to actively and confidently practice, develop, and self-assess complex surgical techniques (Wulf et al., 2006).

PROJECT AIMS
1.) Prior to entering the M3 rotations, establish preliminary skills to suture and knot tie during the Transition to Clerkship workshop. 
2.) Critically examine students’ developing surgical skills captured on a video recording during various M3 rotations. 
3.) Determine medical students’ perceptions of own suture skills.

METHODOLOGY
End-of-M2 Suture Skill Survey
• A 10-question survey was sent out to all matriculating M3 students just prior to the Transition to Clerkship (TTC) Workshop in June 2016.
• Survey questions focused on perceived ease with various suture skills, clinical apprenticeship mentor, dominant hand, and previous suture experience.

Transition to Clerkship (TTC) Workshop (2016)
• All matriculating third-year medical students participated in the TTC Workshop.
• Student dyads were provided a suture and knot tying kit:
  • 90 minutes of instruction was facilitated from department-created videos, allowing clinical faculty to individually address questions and assist in the development of skills.
  • Students evaluated one another using a rubric on the skills of: instrument handling, square knot, and two-handed technique.

Student Videotaping and Self-Reflection
• Study population was randomized into control group and experimental group. Students self-selected their participation.
• Participating students received access to a password-protected D2L site for additional videos, resources, drop boxes, and rubrics.

RESULTS
End-of-M2 Suture Skill Survey
• 155 matriculating M3 students completed the Suture Skill pre-survey:

TTC Workshop
• 198 M3 students completed the Continuous Professional Development Course Evaluation:
  • Comments regarding strengths, opportunities to improve and recommendations for future suture sessions:
    “The technique shown was different from what many of us had learned previously. I think we spent too much time ‘holding’ the instruments and not enough time with the other skills. For instance, each person only had time to do 3 or 4 interrupted stitches and a few knots.”
    “I found this workshop to be very useful. The duration was just right, the videos were short and easy to follow for demonstration. Would highly recommend to continue this session in future orientations.”

Submitted Videos and Reflections
• 30 Students enrolled in the project (2016-2017 academic year)
• 5 submitted student videos
• 5 submitted student reflections
• Students have the entire academic year to submit content

CONCLUSION
Upon the conclusion of the TTC Workshop, students remarked that it was helpful to have basic skills scaffolded prior to beginning surgical rotations such as Obstetrics and Gynecology and Surgery. Initial students enrolled in the study reflected that the suture pads and supplemental videos were helpful for practice and other face-to-face workshops (which were provided by SEMA and Student Surgical Society) were helpful to improve muscle memory. Feelings of doubt were documented when initially learning advanced suture skills, however with ongoing practice, confidence improved.

NEXT STEPS
• Evaluate student videos and self-reflections
• Determine the efficacy of the supplemental educational experiences
• Revise curriculum

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
This project was supported by the Medical College of Wisconsin Learning Resources Grant for the 2016-2017 academic year.

REFERENCES