This article explores clinical practice competencies as a form of assessment within post-registration nurse education.

Abstract:

This article explores and critically evaluates clinical practice competencies as a form of assessment within post-registration nurse education, specifically relating to competence assessment of intravenous (IV) therapy. In the first article in this two-part series, ‘Competency assessment in intravenous therapy and vascular access: part 1’ (BJN, 22(16)), an in-depth literature review was carried out and applied to current competency assessment design. Clinical staff opinion was sought to evaluate users’ opinions of this assessment method against recommended literature. The aim of both articles is to describe critically and analyse existing practice using this form of assessment, and relate other forms of assessment to IV therapy and vascular access clinical competence. A small-scale study was performed to evaluate whether clinical competency assessment is the most appropriate form of assessment of IV therapy and vascular access skills. A questionnaire was designed to assess nurse opinion in relation to advantages (positives) and disadvantages (negatives) of clinical practice competency assessment; 35 randomly selected post-registered nurses were included in the sample. Findings illustrated that clinical competency assessment is the most appropriate form for the assessment of clinical skills in IV therapy. However, recommendations were made for the possible use of Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) assessment. Furthermore, this report recommends the assessment of
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theory and knowledge through written exams or multiple-choice questions (MCQs) as an addition to clinical practice competence assessment for IV therapy.