BOOK REVIEWS

Evans BW, Kravitz L, Walker N, Lefteri K, eds. *Pharmacy OSCEs: A Revision Guide*. London, UK: Pharmaceutical Press; 2013, 237 pp, \$36.99 (softcover), ISBN 9780857110435.

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With a continued movement toward performance-based teaching and assessment in pharmacy education comes a need for resources for the development of the instruction and examinations. Through a multitude of training opportunities in the United States and Canada, pharmacy educators have been able to successfully implement objective structured clinical examinations (OSCEs) into curricula. However, programs may struggle to adequately provide structured learning that aligns with examinations that are developed and used for low-, medium-, and high-stake situations (eg, participation points, component of course score, and progression examination, respectively).

Evans and colleagues have developed a text similar to Canadian-based resources, such as Marankan's *Canadian Pharmacy Exams: Pharmacist MCQ Review*, in an attempt to prepare students for success in clinical examinations. *Pharmacy OSCEs, A Revision Guide* aims to prepare candidates for OSCEs, claiming to "give the best opportunity to perform as well as possible." Through chapters of cases themed by competencies (ie, Responding to symptoms and history-taking, Systems-based client assessment, Counselling, Problems involving calculations), the authors and editors have pulled together a seemingly comprehensive arsenal of scenarios for candidates to review on paper. Therein lies the problem: *on paper*. Objective structured clinical examinations and

other performance-based examinations are rooted in a shift to assess clinical skills rather than only clinical knowledge. Skills are demonstrated and practiced, not simply read in text.

The most useful component of the book for candidates may be the 21-page introduction, which includes helpful acronyms to prompt students' memories; tips for communication, such as when to use open and closed questions; and ideas for review aids for 'bell ringers' or medications with specific nuances to which special attention should be given. Additionally, the scenarios could be used by pharmacy educators to prompt ideas for cases to be developed.

A more appropriate method to familiarize learners with this type of examination is through practice of skills and applying knowledge. Scaffolding of teaching OSCEs through the curriculum or a course allows students to observe and practice these skills in action. Showing or providing a video of an example encounter is far more effective in explaining an environment and expectations, as is allowing students to gain experience through practicing skills in a formative setting such as a skill-based laboratory course or even introductory pharmacy practice experiences. The comparison of tying a bow tie comes to mind. Could one read about it and be successful? Likely not. A demonstration (in person or video) and opportunity to practice will produce a more skillful learner.

While the text is well written and contains only minor regional dialect and references specific to the United Kingdom, the claimed intent of the text may be misleading and candidates should use this guide with full caution that this alone cannot provide preparation to succeed in OSCEs.

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