

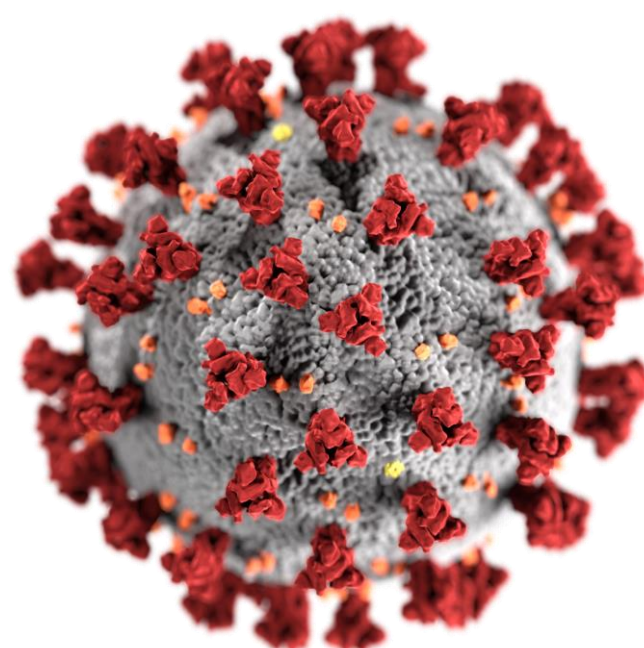
Crisis and Opportunity: The COVID Story of an Undergraduate Psychiatry Assessment Program

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Background

- ❖ The University of Toronto is one of the largest medical schools in Canada, with approximately 260 students admitted every year.
- ❖ The third year Psychiatry Clerkship Course consists of a six week clinical rotation delivered at multiple teaching sites in the Greater Toronto area
- ❖ Assessment Program in Psychiatry Clerkship pre-COVID consisted of the following:
 - ❖ Written Assessment – 40 Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs), 5 sets of Short Answer Questions (SAQs)
 - ❖ Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) – 4 stations
 - ❖ Workplace Based Assessment - Mini Assessment of Clinical Encounter (MiniACE)
- ❖ The COVID-19 pandemic created significant challenges to undergraduate (UG) psychiatric education. In response to the pandemic, it was necessary for us to modify the assessment program
- ❖ We leveraged this opportunity to revisit our assessment program with an objective to improve the validity and quality of our assessment strategies while monitoring its impact on measurement and evaluation of student performance
- ❖ Opportunity to align practices with evidence, improve existing assessments, improve overall approach to assessment



Methods/Interventions

Table 1: Changes to Assessment Program After COVID Disruption

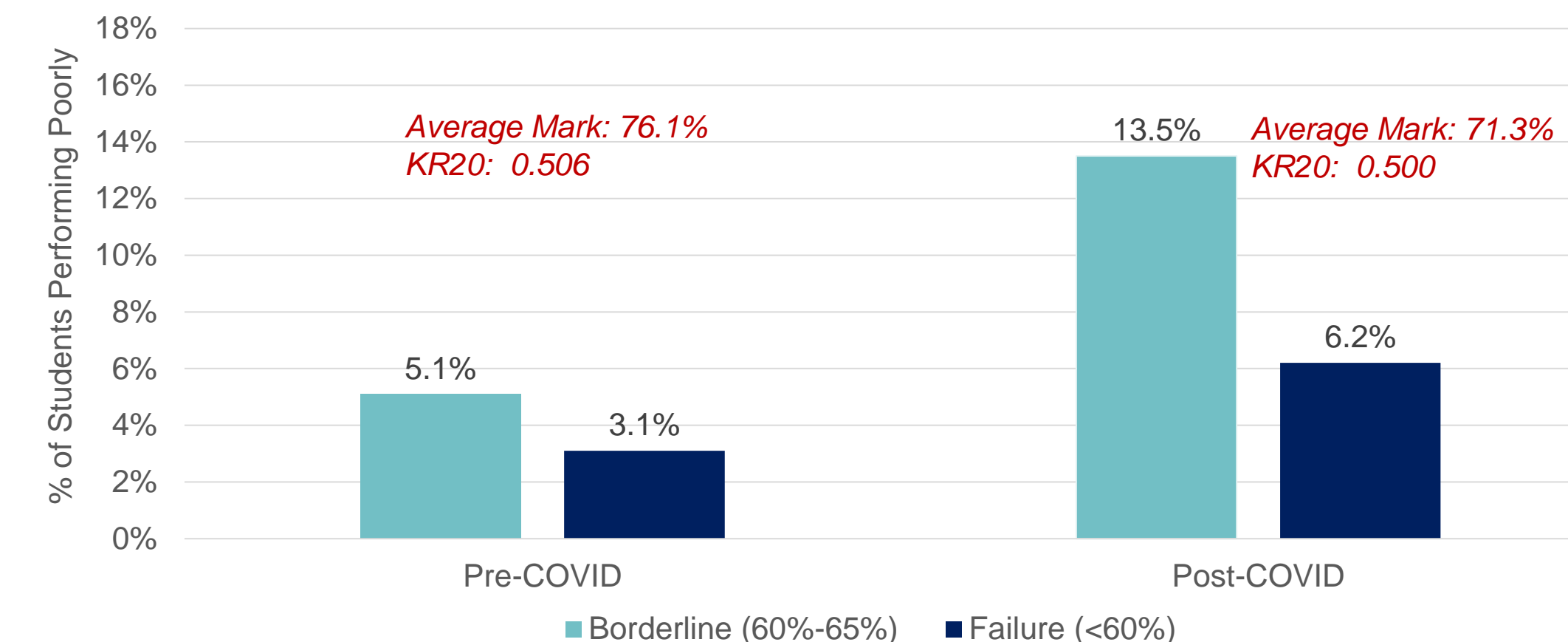
	Pre-COVID 2019-2020 Academic Year	Interventions Post-COVID 2020-2021 Academic Year	Rationale
Written Assessment	No Written Assessment Blueprint	Specific Blueprint created	To increase content validity between written assessments
	40 MCQs 5 sets of SAQs	5 sets of SAQs replaced by 8 sets of Key Feature Questions (KFQs)	KFQs better assess clinical reasoning, and are more validated
	Quality Assurance by Associate Course Director	Assessment Sub-committee established for item and written assessment review	Ensures a more robust review of quality of written assessments and items
OSCE	4 Stations in person	Discontinued	Not feasible given physical distancing requirements. Virtual OSCE not sufficient to assess breadth of psychiatric skills
WBAs	6 MiniACEs – 3 MiniACEs filled by faculty, could be direct observation or case based discussion	6 MiniACEs – 4 must be direct observation of psychiatric clinical skills by faculty as opposed to residents.	Given the discontinuation of the OSCE, this ensures observed assessment of clinical skills by faculty.

Results

- ❖ WBAs identified no students in difficulty Pre-COVID, or Post-COVID
- ❖ 1% of students failed the OSCE
- ❖ Written Assessment – see Figure 1
 - ❖ 254 students wrote the Pre-COVID Exam, 260 students wrote the Post-COVID Exam
 - ❖ Borderline Performance defined as 60-65%
 - ❖ Failure defined as <60%
 - ❖ Average Mark decreased from **76.1%** to **71.3%**
 - ❖ Reliability (KR20) not significantly changed
- ❖ Written assessment blueprint created (available upon request)
- ❖ Assessment Sub-committee established (Terms of references available upon request)

Results

Figure 1: Student Performance on Pre-COVID vs Post-COVID Written Assessment



Conclusions/Future Directions

- ❖ The COVID pandemic created a crisis in undergraduate medical education including in the University of Toronto Psychiatry Clerkship Assessment Program.
- ❖ This was also an opportunity to review and enhance an assessment program to align with evidence based best practices
- ❖ Thus far, WBAs in our setting were not successful in identifying clerkship students in difficulty.
- ❖ A more specific blueprint, KFQs, and careful review of items may have resulted in a more challenging exam that identified approximately twice as many students with difficulty in applying knowledge.
- ❖ Increased difficulty with the written assessment could be due to less adequate pre-clinical experiences caused by the COVID pandemic. This trend is comparable to other clerkship courses.
- ❖ A standard setting exercise is necessary for both the Written Assessment and WBA.
- ❖ Further faculty development in regards to WBAs and assessment of knowledge in the clinical setting could be explored.
- ❖ Despite the crisis created by the COVID pandemic, the University of Toronto Psychiatry Clerkship was able to implement significant changes to the assessment program that resulted in more robust and evidence based assessments.