

ASSESSMENT OF MEDICAL STUDENTS

PURPOSES OF ASSESSMENT

- Judging mastery of essential knowledge and skills.
- Measuring improvement over time.
- Diagnosing academic difficulties.
- Providing feedback for students.
- Motivating students to study.
- Setting standards.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of the course.
- Quality control for the public (LCME).

TWO TYPES OF ASSESSMENTS:

- **Formative** – undertaken on a continuous basis during a course. Guides students' future study or activity.
- **Summative** – assessments on which decisions about the students' future are to be made.

EDUCATIONAL MEASUREMENTS:

- **Reliability** – a measure of an assessment's consistency or precision.

RELIABILITY OF MULTIPLE CHOICE EXAMS CAN BE IMPROVED BY:

- Writing simple and clear directions.
 - Assuring that test items match course objectives and content.
 - Ensuring that test items are clearly written and follow NBME item writing principles.
 - Increasing the number of test items – i.e., lengthening the assessment.
 - Providing satisfactory exam conditions – e.g., room temperature, comfortable seating, quiet setting, and appropriate time limits.
- **Content Validity of a Test** – the degree to which the assessment contains a representative sample of the material taught in the course.

VALIDITY CAN BE IMPROVED BY:

- Carefully matching assessment with learning objectives; textbooks, course website and other learning resources; and what faculty teach in lectures, labs, small groups, and other settings.
- Increasing the sample of objectives and content areas included in any assessment;
- Producing an examination blueprint;
- Using test methods that are appropriate for the objectives;
- Ensuring adequate security/supervision to avoid dishonesty.

*Source: *A Handbook for Medical Teachers, 4th Edition., 2001 (Available in OME Library).*