Defining Priorities for the Assessment of Competence in Care of the Elderly by Family Physicians – The Priority Topics

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Background
• The College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC) has introduced Certificates of Added Competence (CACs) in five domains, one being Care of the Elderly (COE).
• CAC awards will be based on the demonstration of specific competencies.
• The first steps of defining these competencies are a determination of priority topics (What needs to be dealt with tasks/problems/topics/situations).

Objective. To determine priority topics for the assessment of competence in COE.

Design
• A modified Delphi technique was used with on-line surveys and face-to-face meetings.
• The Working Group (WG) of six physicians, with enhanced skills in COE, acted as the nominal group.
• A larger group of randomly selected family practitioners from across Canada acted as the Validation Group (WG)

Procedure
• The Working Group followed by the Validation Group, completed electronic write-in surveys that asked them to identify the priority topics.
• Responses from the two groups were correlated.
• Based on the responses, the Working Group, then, used face-to-face meetings and iterative discussion to decide on the final list of priority topics.

Analysis. Descriptive statistics and Pearson’s correlation.

Results

| Working Group Members | 9 |
| Validation Group Participants | 41 |
| Response Rate: 19% (41 / 212) |

Correlation of Selected Priority Topics

1. Medical conditions
2. Cognitive impairment
3. Appropriate Prescribing
4. Falls and mobility issues
5. Teams (working with)
6. Communication issues
7. Frailty continuum/spectrum
8. Decision making capacity
9. Family and informal care supports
10. Care in different settings – e.g., home, outpatient long term, hospital
11. Organising care using community resources
12. Goals of care
13. End-of-life care
14. Depression/Anxiety
15. Delirium
16. Urinary Incontinence
17. Driving Issues
18. Pain

Conclusion. Defining the required competencies is a first step to establishing national standards in COE and these standards can be the basis for awarding CACs. The methodology used and the high correlation between the lists generated by the WG and the VG suggest that this priority topic list is valid for COE.

Next Steps. Define Key features and higher cognitive levels for each priority topic.