

Ask the Expert: Validity

I've been at NBME for 23 years and didn't think I would stay, I was going to give it six months. I got to NBME and fell in love with the work.

On-screen: [Monica Cuddy. Senior measurement scientist, growth and innovation. NBME.]

My background's actually in sociology, and that I think gives me somewhat of a unique and, and very, in my mind, useful lens through which to view medical education, assessment and, and even validity.

On-screen: [What is validity? Why is it so important?]

Validity refers to how well your assessment measures what it's intended to measure. It's really foundational to test development and test evaluation processes.

I think of myself as working at the intersection of assessment, medical education and sociology because I think sociology can be useful for understanding lots of things or better understanding lots of things if we want to think about how people interact or how people work in groups or how social structures inform how people interact or how people work in groups. Sociology is a great way to start to unpack that, and I think that has real relevance for how we educate physicians in the U.S., how physicians practice in the U.S., as well as how we assess them along that journey.

On-screen: [What is an example of a validity study you are working on?]

We are also developing a new item type intended to measure aspects of clinical reasoning, particularly rationale provision.

On-screen: [Clinical Reasoning: a process by which physicians observe, collect, and interpret data to diagnose and treat patients.]

So, the ability to justify your clinical thinking, your clinical decision making. We are doing a validity study for those items - that is a think-aloud study. And in a think-aloud study, you have examinees take the items and to literally verbalize everything that comes to their mind as they do so. The idea is that you're trying to capture what is happening cognitively for them as they engage with the items.

In the context of these new items geared towards measuring clinical reasoning, we're interested to see which aspects of clinical reasoning examinees are demonstrating, when and how they're demonstrating those aspects. And we're finding some really

exciting things related to their ability to provide an explanation for their answer choices, which is consistent with what we are hoping the items measure.

On-screen: [What new and exciting projects are you working on next?]

I am very excited about a project that I have recently started, and it is centered on assessing healthcare teams.

I think the ability to be able to say something about how a healthcare team performs is very important. What do we mean by teamwork? What does that entail in the healthcare context? How do we think about what skills and behaviors link to teamwork that then we would be able to observe and hopefully measure?

So, it's super important to think about how healthcare teams are functioning because we also know from the research that well-functioning healthcare teams are more efficient and they're more safe. So, I'm really interested in trying to better understand how healthcare teams operate and how we can provide information to team members and to entire teams about their performance.

On-screen: [Follow us on our journey. reassessesthefuture.org. Copyright 2024 NBME. All rights reserved.]