Reconceptualising Standard Setting in Medical Education

Boaz Shulruf and Phil Jones, MESO

Abstract:

Setting standards in educational assessment is one of the most challenging branches of psychometrics. The main challenge is that standard setting entangles subjective judgement with statistical procedures as well as decision-making process, which aim to provide defensible valid and reliable outcomes. Nonetheless research demonstrates that whenever two or more different standard setting methods are applied to the same dataset, each produced a different cut-score, which questions the merit of such methods. This presentation distinguishes Policy Related Standard Setting (PRSS) from Test Related Standard Setting (TRSS) at the conceptual and practical levels. While PRSS is a process, which defines policy makers’ expectations, TRSS is a measurement process. Thus undertaking both processes is essential for determining reliable and defensible standards.

However, even when PRSS and TRSS are well integrated, one cannot avoid the impact of errors in measurement on the quality of assessment. Thus, this presentation also demonstrates how effective adjust for errors in measurement could improve the quality of standard setting methods.