

The Need for Assessment and Feedback for Today's Practicing Physicians

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Continuing professional development (CPD) provides physicians a variety of educational activities to enhance their knowledge and skills, as well as raise the quality and safety of patient care and improve health outcomes.¹⁻⁵ Such activities may range from traditional formal lectures or workshops to informal hands-on learning lessons from seasoned healthcare veterans. They can also occur through external assessments such as chart audits, peer practice visits, or patient satisfaction surveys.¹ By using any or all of these CPD techniques, physicians should be able to monitor and evaluate their own professional performance. This learning format allows physicians to use assessment data to guide one's own learning and thus, implement potential practice changes.⁶

For physicians, one of the greatest benefits is the opportunity to receive ample assessments and feedback on their performance practices. In fact, Sargeant and colleagues suggest a 4-step process to increase the value of incorporating assessment and feedback of CPD, which consists of: (1) accessing and receiving data, (2) engaging with data, (3) using data to plan and implement a response, and (4) measuring the outcome of that response.¹ From the physicians' perspective, the goal of receiving performance data back from chart audits, feedback and patient questionnaires, peer office visits, or inspections is to improve their own practices when deficiencies exist. By engaging with the data, it encourages physicians to reflect, interpret, and confirm or disconfirm one's own self-perceptions about their practices.¹ In fact, several studies indicate that self-reflection on feedback increased physician insight while facilitated reflective discussions (from mentors, coaches, industry leaders, etc.) led to a greater sense of personal engagement, growth, and acceptance.⁷⁻¹¹ Next, physicians who use this data and feedback are enabled to make specific practice changes with the sole intention of addressing practice gaps and improving patient outcomes. In order to obtain

such optimal results, physicians should set realistic goals as well as develop specific items for attaining one's desired outcomes.¹ Lastly, physicians should also foster strategies for the overall evaluation of learning and change, which relies on the ability to access, compile, and dissect performance data.¹ Those who can utilize these 4 areas will be able to successfully evaluate their performance data, which will not only guide their CPD but identify areas of practice improvement.

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