ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Setting Standards for Judging the Rapid Film Reporting Section in Postgraduate Radiology Assessment: a Feasibility Study

AF Abdul Rahim¹, NS Roslan¹, IL Shuaib², MS Abdullah³, KA Sayuti³, H Abu Hassan⁴

¹Department of Medical Education, School of Medical Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia ²Department of Radiology, Advanced Medical and Dental Institute, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia ³Department of Radiology, School of Medical Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia

⁴Department of Radiology, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

Objective: We investigated the feasibility of applying a standard-setting procedure for the rapid film reporting examination of the Malaysian National Conjoint Board of Radiology.

Methods: We selected the modified Angoff standard-setting process. Judges were nominated and trained, performance categories were discussed, and judges' ratings on films were collected after an iterative procedure. The process was then evaluated for evidence of validity.

Results: A cut-off score of 92% resulted, compared with the 80% usually used. Judges were satisfied with the training and understood the procedure and their roles. In all, 27.3% felt that time given for the task was not sufficient. A total of 54.5% of judges thought the final passing cut-off score of 92% was too high, and 27.3% were not confident regarding its appropriateness. The inter-rater reliability was 0.928. External comparison with a 'gold standard' of supervisor ratings revealed a sensitivity of 0.25 and specificity of 1.00 compared with the traditional cut-off score having a sensitivity of 0.92 and specificity of 0.33. In this kind of situation, high specificity is considered to be more important than high sensitivity.

Conclusion: Standard setting for the rapid film reporting examination using the modified Angoff method was feasible with robust procedural, internal, and external validity evidence. Areas for improvement were identified to address the perceived high cut-off score obtained and improve the overall process.

Key Words: Education, medical; Preceptorship; Psychometrics; Radiology; Teacher training

Correspondence: Dr AF Abdul Rahim, Department of Medical Education, School of Medical Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia

Email: fuad@usm.my

Submitted: 8 Mar 2020; Accepted: 4 Jun 2020

Contributors: AFAR and NSR designed the study. ILS, MSA, KAS, and HAH acquired the data. AFAR, NSR analysed the data. AFAR, NSR, ILS, and HAH drafted the manuscript. All authors critically revised the manuscript for important intellectual content. All authors had full access to the data, contributed to the study, approved the final version for publication, and take responsibility for its accuracy and integrity.

Conflicts of Interest: All authors have disclosed no conflicts of interest

Funding/Support: This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Ethics approval: The study was granted an exemption from ethical approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee USM. The participants were treated in accordance with the tenets of the Declaration of Helsinki. The participants provided written informed consent for all data collection.

中文摘要

於放射科培訓醫生的快速放射影像報告考核中使用標準設定:可行性研究

AF Abdul Rahim

NS Roslan

IL Shuaib

MS Abdullah

KA Sayuti

H Abu Hassan

目的:檢視馬來西亞國家放射學聯合委員會以設定快速放射影像報告考核標準的可行性。

方法:採用改良版Angoff標準設定法,獲提名考官須經過培訓、討論考核表現類別,並以迭代程序 收集考官對放射影像片子的評級,然後對該程序進行有效性評估。

結果: 跟一般使用的劃割分數80%相比,本研究的劃割分數為92%。考官對培訓感到滿意,並且 理解過程和他們的角色。當中,27.3%認為完成任務時間不足,54.5%認為最終合格分數過高(即 92%),27.3%對這個合格分數的適當性存疑。評分者間一致度信度為0.928。與主管級醫師評級的 「黃金標準」進行外部比較時,使用劃割分數92%的靈敏度為0.25,特異性為1.00;使用傳統劃割分 數(即80%)的靈敏度則為0.92,特異性為0.33。在這種情況下,高特異性比高靈敏度更為重要。 結論:基於過程上、內部和外部的可靠效度,快速放射影像報告考核中使用改良版Angoff標準設定 法是可行的。研究也就劃割分數過高提出改進之處,以改善整個程序。

INTRODUCTION

Assessment in medical education is an important undertaking; one of its goals is protecting the public by upholding high professional standards.¹ Over the past two decades, medical schools and postgraduate training bodies have put in rigorous efforts to provide valid assessment in certifying physicians. This is guided by the current view of validity as a hypothesis that must be supported by evidence.²

The Malaysian National Conjoint Board of Radiology, responsible for the training of radiologists in Malaysia, has recently embarked on gradually improving the assessment of its graduates. The establishment of standard setting of the assessment procedure is a priority area.

The 4-year training programme is currently divided into three phases. Phase I is the first year, phase II covers the second and third years, and the fourth year is phase III. Assessment is divided into continuous and endof-phase professional examinations. Examinations in Phase I include a multiple true-false (Type X) question examination, an objective structured clinical examination, an objective structured practical examination, and an oral examination. In Phase II the professional examinations include multiple-choice tests, film reporting, and an oral examination. The final Phase III examinations include a rapid film reporting examination, a dissertation, and an oral examination based on the dissertation project.

The rapid film reporting examination simulates the typical day-to-day tasks of a radiologist, who has to review numerous radiographs in a short time, particularly in emergency medicine and general practice situations.³ The examination requires candidates to view several radiographs within a specified amount of time and report on the findings. In the Malaysian setting, candidates need to report on 25 radiographs within 30 minutes. For each film, they have to state whether it is normal or abnormal; and if abnormal, then they have to describe the abnormalities seen. The Royal College of Radiologists in the United Kingdom has reported using rapid reporting sessions as part of their examinations.³

The Board feels that, as part of the final-year highstakes exit examination, the rapid film reporting examination also requires standard setting of its cut-off score.

This article reports on a pilot study of standard setting of the rapid film reporting examination of the Malaysian National Conjoint Board of Radiology. To our knowledge, there is no literature reporting on standard setting of this particular method of assessment. We hope this report will be useful for radiology postgraduate training institutions employing similar assessment modalities.

METHODS

A workshop to introduce members of the board to standard-setting principles and practice was held in April 2019. The workshop was organised with the help of the Medical Education Department from one of the participating universities.

A standard-setting meeting was organised before the rapid film reporting examination in the exit examination for Year 4 candidates in May 2019. It was chaired by one of the authors, ILS.

An eight-step standard-setting planning process was followed.⁴

Selection of a Standard-Setting Method

Modified Angoff is one of the standard-setting methods that offers a systematic procedure in estimating performance standard at the pass-fail level.⁵ It has been used in various high-stakes examinations as it offers the best balance between technical adequacy and feasibility.6 The Modified Angoff method was selected for this examination as it is an absolute standard-setting method the candidates are judged against defined standards rather than cohort performance. This is achieved by asking qualified and trained judges to review test items or prompts before the examination is administered. Although the process can be time-consuming and labourintensive, it is relatively easier and more flexible than other test-based methods. It is supported by a strong body of evidence in the literature and has wide applicability to many formats.7

In the modified Angoff method, judges review items (questions) used in the assessment, discuss and agree on the characteristics of a borderline candidate, and assess the likely performance of borderline candidates for each item. The mean of the judges' estimates for all items is taken as the cut-off score for that particular assessment.⁴

Selection of Judges

The selection of qualified judges is critical for an absolute standard-setting method.⁴ The following criteria are recommended: content expertise, familiarity with the target population, understanding of the task of judging as well as the content materials, being fair and openminded, willingness to follow directions, lack of bias, and willingness to devote their full attention to the task.

A total of 11 judges were chosen after considering the above criteria.

Preparation of Descriptions of Performance Categories

Judges need to have a clear understanding of the performance categories, which are 'narrative descriptions of the minimally acceptable behaviours required in order to be included in a given category'⁴ to enable them to distinguish between different levels of performance.

In licensing and certification situations, the focus is often on discussion and description of a 'borderline candidate'.⁸ Candidates who equal or exceed the performance of these borderline candidates are then deemed 'pass' while those who perform worse are deemed 'fail'.

The group discussed the characteristics of a borderline candidate in the setting of the Radiology Master of Medicine course and agreed that: 'A borderline candidate of the exit examination should demonstrate basic knowledge for safe clinical decision and management, is able to work under minimal supervision, is equipped with basic radiological skills and conducts himself/ herself professionally.'

Training of Judges

The definition of the borderline candidate appears straightforward, but judges often find it difficult to come up with an actual mark after reading a question while thinking like a borderline student.⁴ Judges need familiarisation with the procedure and in generating ratings. Training judges, therefore, is given priority and can take more than one day.⁹

In our situation, apart from attending the introductory workshop mentioned above, judges were also briefed by the department chairperson at the beginning of the exercise. The objectives, procedures for standard setting, and the definition of a borderline candidate were discussed.

Collection of Ratings or Judgements

All 25 films used in the rapid film reporting examination, together with the answers, were shown in the standardsetting session. Each film was shown for 10 seconds and judges were asked to individually decide, "Will a borderline candidate be able to decide whether this film is normal or abnormal? If abnormal, will they be able to describe the abnormality in full?" Based on the answers to these questions the judges calculated the scores obtained by their hypothetical borderline candidates. Judges then announced the scores verbally in turn and their judgements were recorded immediately in a pre-prepared Excel file by an assistant. The rating of one film by judges and the collection of their judgements was considered as one round of standard setting.

Provision of Feedback and Facilitation of Discussion

We included a discussion session after each round of judgement. The completed spreadsheet was projected to a screen where judges could see their standing relative to the other judges. This 'normative information' helps judges generate relevant and realistic cut-off scores.⁸ Ratings at the extreme ends were then discussed. A second round of standard setting followed, where judges were then allowed to revise their ratings. This step of feedback and discussion followed by a second round of ratings is known as an 'iterative procedure'.⁴

Evaluation of the Standard-Setting Procedure

There are three main sources of evidence to support the validity of a standard-setting procedure: procedural evidence, internal evidence, and external evidence.⁴

For procedural evidence, we reviewed the practicality and implementation of the exercise and obtained feedback from the judges involved. To this end, an online questionnaire, taken from Yudkowsky et al⁴ was administered. It looked at judges' perceptions of their orientation, training, and implementation as well as their confidence in the resulting cut-off scores.

Internal evidence was evaluated by calculating the interrater reliability, the standard deviation of judge scores (judgement SD), and the standard deviation of examinee test scores (test SD). The judgement SD should be no more than 25% of the test SD.¹⁰

For the external evidence, we looked at the aspect of reasonableness which is '...the degree to which cutoff scores derived from the standard-setting process classify examinees into groups in a manner consistent with other information about the examinees'.¹¹ We adapted the 'diagnostic performance' approach used by Schoonheim-Klein et al¹² whereby two clinical supervisors in each participating university were asked to independently rate their candidates' ability in rapid reporting on a four-point scale: excellent, borderline pass, borderline fail, and poor. The supervisors, who observe their supervisees over a prolonged time period, were guided by a rubric for each decision. To ensure credible ratings, they were informed that their ratings were not a measure of supervision quality and would not contribute to the candidates' examination marks. Candidates rated as 'poor' and 'borderline fail' were grouped as 'incompetent', and those rated as 'borderline pass' and 'excellent' were grouped as 'competent'. This clinical rating (considered as the 'true qualification') was then compared with the pass-fail classification obtained from the standard-setting method under study to get the rate of 'false positives' and 'false negatives'. We also calculated the sensitivity and specificity for the traditional and standard-setting-derived passing mark. Sensitivity is defined as the ability of the standardsetting-derived passing mark to correctly identify the competent candidates or the true-positive rate. On the other hand, specificity is defined as the ability of the mark to correctly eliminate the incompetent candidates, or true-negative rate. Table 1 summarises these concepts and the formulas used to arrive at the decisions.

Provision of Results, Consequences and Validity Evidence to Decision-Makers

Ultimately, policymakers set the standards, not the judges.⁸ As this is a pilot study, the validity data were presented to the board to help decide on the adoption of the standard-setting procedure.

A summary of these procedures is given as steps before (Figure 1), during (Figure 2) and after (Figure 3) the standard-setting procedure.

RESULTS Procedural Evidence

A cut-off score of 0.95 (95%) was obtained for the first round, and 0.92 (92%) for the second round. The traditional passing mark of the rapid film reporting was 80%.

Eleven judges provided feedback via the online questionnaire. The panel was comprised of an almost equal number of junior (<10 years of post-residency practice and <5 years of involvement in teaching the Radiology Master of Medicine course) and senior

Table 1. Possible consequences of decisions in diagnostic performance approach.

Supervisors' rating	Rapid reporting decision		
	Pass	Fail	
Competent	True positive	False negative)	
Incompetent	False positive	True negative)	



Figure 1. Flowchart showing steps before standard setting.



Figure 2. Flowchart showing steps during standard setting.



Figure 3. Flowchart showing steps after standard setting.

members. The same can be said of gender distribution. The majority of panel members were ethnic Malay (Table 2).

As regards feedback from judges about the training and orientation that was provided before the session, judges were generally clear about the purpose of the test, the nature of the examinees, the characteristics of a borderline candidate, and the rating task to be performed (Table 3).

In terms of feedback from judges regarding the process of standard setting, the majority were positive (Table 4). Interesting points to note included the time given for the rating task, where a minority (27.3%) felt that it was insufficient. Slightly over half (54.5%) of judges thought that the final passing score of 92% was too high. A minority (27.3%) were not confident regarding the appropriateness of the cut-off score.

Internal Evidence

As stated above, cut-off scores of 0.95 and 0.92 were obtained in the first and second rounds, respectively (Table 5). The judgement SD was 0.04 on both rounds while the test SD was 19.4. Inter-rater reliability was 0.733 and 0.928 for the first and second rounds, respectively.

External Evidence

As the 'diagnostic performance approach' assumes the supervisors' rating to be the gold standard, we calculated the inter-rater reliability of the two supervisors. Cohen's kappa revealed a good agreement between the two supervisors at $\varkappa = 0.780$, p < 0.001.

Table 2. Background information on the panel of judges.

	No. (%)
Experience in practice post-residency	
0-10 y	5 (45.5)
11-30 у	6 (54.5)
Experience in teaching radiology (Radiology	
Master of Medicine attained)	
0-5 у	5 (45.5)
5-10 y	2 (18.2)
10-15 y	2 (18.2)
15-20 у	2 (18.2)
Gender	
Male	6 (54.5)
Female	5 (45.5)
Ethnic background	
Malay	9 (81.8)
Chinese	1 (9.1)
Indian	1 (9.1)

Table 3. Feedback from standard-setting judges regarding training prior to the session.

	Training (%)		
	Very clear	Clear	Not clear
1.1 How clear is the purpose of the test and the nature of the examinees?	72.7	27.3	0
1.2 How clear are the characteristics of a borderline examinee?	54.5	45.5	0
1.3 How clear is the rating task to be performed?	72.7	27.3	0

Table 4. Feedback from standard-setting judges regarding the standard-setting process and results.

	Post standard setting (%)		
2.1 How difficult was it to provide ratings?	Not difficult (72.7%)	Difficult (27.3%)	Very difficult (0)
2.2 Was sufficient time given for the rating task?	Too much time (0)	Right amount of time (72.7%)	Not enough time (27.3%)
2.3 Was sufficient time provided for discussion?	Too much time (0)	Right amount of time (100%)	Not enough time (0)
2.4 How useful were the performance data provided?	Very useful (54.5%)	Useful (45.5%)	Not useful (0)
2.5 Do you think the final passing scores are appropriate for the examinees?	Too high (54.5%)	Just right (45.5%)	Too low (0)
2.6 How confident are you in the appropriateness of the cut-off scores?	Very confident (18.2%)	Confident (54.5%)	Not confident (27.3%)

Table 5. Statistics of the standard-setting exercise and examination.

	First-round summary statistics	Second-round summary statistics
Mean cut-off score	0.95	0.92
Judgement SD	0.04	0.04
Minimum cut-off score	0.86	0.84
Maximum cut-off score	1.00	0.98
Inter-rater reliability	0.733	0.928
Number of raters	11	11
Test SD	19	.4
Test SD/4	4	.85

Abbreviations: test SD = standard deviation of examinee test scores; judgement SD = standard deviation of judge scores.

The supervisors' rating classified 24 candidates as 'competent' and three candidates as 'incompetent'. As illustrated in Table 6, the traditional passing score of 80% resulted in a passing rate of 91.7% and a failure rate of 8.3% among competent candidates. It is interesting to note the occurrence of false-positives, where two incompetent candidates passed the assessment. Only one out of three incompetent candidates failed the assessment using the traditional passing score. The sensitivity and specificity for this passing score were found to be at 0.92 and 0.33, respectively.

On the other hand, as per Table 7, using the standardsetting-derived passing score of 92% resulted in a 25% passing rate among competent candidates. No **Table 6.** Pass and fail rates of candidates who were classified 'competent' and 'incompetent' by their supervisors using the traditional passing mark of 80%.

Supervisors' rating (n = 27)	Rapid reporting pass	Rapid reporting fail
Competent (n = 24, 88.9%)	22 (91.7%)	2 (8.3%)
Incompetent (n = 3, 11.1%)	2 (66.7%)	1 (33.3%)

Table 7. Pass and fail rates of candidates that were classified as 'competent' and 'incompetent' by their supervisors using the standard-setting-derived passing mark of 92%.

Supervisors' rating (n = 27)	Rapid reporting Pass	Rapid reporting fail
Competent (n = 24, 88.9%)	6 (25.0%)	18 (75.0%)
Incompetent (n = 3, 11.1%)	0	3 (100.0%)

incompetent candidates passed the assessment but there was a high false-negative occurrence where 75% of competent candidates failed the assessment. All three incompetent candidates failed the assessment. This gives this passing score a sensitivity of 0.25 and specificity of 1.00.

DISCUSSION

The main aim of this pilot study was to assess the validity of the standard-setting procedure for the rapid film reporting examination. The current concept of validity is the accumulation of evidence to support or refute a particular interpretation or use of examination data.¹³ In the context of standard setting, we looked at the procedural, internal, and external evidence to support the validity of our rapid film reporting standard-setting exercise⁸ and generally found the results encouraging.

Procedurally, the process was feasible and practical. No major hurdles were encountered in the planning as well as preparation of the standard-setting exercise, including the physical setting. The positive responses from judges regarding implementation of points raised in the questionnaire provided additional evidence of the credibility of the standard-setting process.⁸

We take note that thorough and meticulous documentation of the procedure is critical.⁹ This includes the summary of judges' background information, which includes speciality and teaching experience, as shown in Table 2. The background and experiential composition of the judges' panel should be determined before their nomination.⁹

It is interesting to note that slightly more than half of the judges (54.5%) believed that the cut-off score obtained was too high. Despite that, only 27.3% of judges were not confident of the cut-off score obtained. We need to differentiate between the perception of judges that the cut-off score is high from actual unrealistically high cut-off scores. The clarity of the judges regarding their role and the nature of the candidates, as well as their confidence in the cut-off score, are more in favour of the former. The latter is noted to happen in many standard-setting situations, particularly using the Angoff method when judges are not given performance data.⁴

Still, the issue of producing a cut-off score that is too high needs to be addressed, as it may hinder the acceptance of standard setting in the future. One approach is to increase the quality and efficiency of all the eight steps of standard setting described in the methodology, especially the types of feedback given to the judges during step 6 (Provision of Feedback and Facilitation of Discussion). In our case, the judges' relative standing to each other, known as normative information, were revealed following the first round. The literature also describes providing judges with information about actual candidate performance on each item (reality information) and the consequences of the generated cut-off scores (impact information).⁸ To have these kinds of information available, however, requires the standard-setting procedure to be done after the actual examination. Another approach is to adjust the cut-off score using the standard error of measurement of the test. If false-negative decisions (failing competent candidates) are of concern, then the cut-off score can be lowered by one standard error of measurement.⁴

The internal evidence of validity includes the high interrater reliability of the judgements, which was 0.733 for the first round and 0.928 for the second round. Reliability \geq 0.9 is needed for very-high-stakes examinations.¹⁴ It is worth noting that the reliability increased from 0.7 to 0.9 in the second round, supporting the value of the iterative procedure in standard setting.

The judgement SD was small (0.04), less than the recommended limit, which is 25% of the standard deviation of the examinee test scores¹⁰; in this case, 4.85. Several factors may have contributed to this. One is that all films to be used for the examination were standardised in the session, instead of just sampling some films. Another possible factor is the adequate number of judges, 11 in this case. The recommended number is 10 to 12 judges.⁴

The sensitivity and specificity testing has shown the value of standard setting in establishing consequential validity evidence, discussed as part of 'reasonableness' in standard-setting literature.9 In this exercise, using the traditional passing mark of 80% resulted in three incompetent candidates passing the assessment. For high-stakes assessment such as the exit examination, high specificity is considered to be more important than high sensitivity. This is because re-examination can correct the false-negative occurrences but not the false-positive candidates who may practise unsafely below the desired standards.¹² However, as judges have been shown to naturally produce higher passing scores in Angoff exercises, future practice could improve with more training sessions, a more detailed discussion of the borderline standards, and using performance data during the judging process as a control measure.^{12,15,16}

CONCLUSION

In summary, we are encouraged by the findings of this standard-setting feasibility study of the rapid film reporting examination. It appears feasible and seems to have good procedural, internal, and external validity. Areas of potential improvement include more judge training and providing more feedback data to judges. We look forward to its official implementation in the near future. Standards for Judging Rapid Film Reporting

REFERENCES

- Epstein RM. Assessment in medical education. N Engl J Med. 2007;356:387-96.
- Beckman TJ, Cook DA, Mandrekar JN. What is the validity evidence for assessments of clinical teaching? J Gen Intern Med. 2005;20:1159-64.
- Booth TC, Martins RD, McKnight L, Courtney K, Malliwal R. The Fellowship of the Royal College of Radiologists (FRCR) examination: a review of the evidence. Clin Radiol. 2018;73:992-8.
- Yudkowsky R, Downing SM, Tekian A. Standard Setting. In: Yudkowsky R, Park YS, Downing SM, editors. Assessment in Health Professions Education. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge; 2020: p 86-105.
- Shulruf B, Wilkinson T, Weller J, Jones P, Poole P. Insights into the Angoff method: results from a simulation study. BMC Med Educ. 2016;16:134.
- Cizek GJ, Bunch MB. The Angoff method and Angoff variations. In: Cizek GJ, Bunch MB, editors. Standard Setting. California: Sage Publications; 2011: p 81-95.
- Plake BS, Cizek GJ. Variations on a theme. ¬The modified Angoff, extended Angoff and Yes/No standard setting methods. In: Cizek GJ, editor. Setting Performance Standards: Foundations, Methods, and Innovations. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge; 2012: p 181-99.
- Cizek GJ, Earnest DS. Setting performance standards on tests. In: Lane S, Raymond MR, Haladyna TM, editors. Handbook of Test Development. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge; 2016; p 212-37.

- Hambleton RK, Pitoniak MJ, Coppella JM. Essential steps in setting performance standards on educational tests and strategies for assessing the reliability of results. In: Cizek GJ, editor. Setting Performance Standards: Foundations, Methods, and Innovations. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge; 2012: p 47-76.
- 10. Meskauskas JA. Setting standards for credentialing examinations: an update. Eval Health Prof. 1986;9:187-203.
- Cizek GJ. The forms and functions of evaluations in the standard setting process. In: Cizek GJ, editor. Setting Performance Standards: Foundations, Methods, and Innovations. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge; 2012; p 165-78.
- 12. Schoonheim-Klein M, Muijtjens A, Habets L, Manogue M, van der Vleuten C, van der Velden U. Who will pass the dental OSCE? Comparison of the Angoff and the borderline regression standard setting methods. Eur J Dent Educ. 2009;13:162-71.
- Downing SM. Validity: on the meaningful interpretation of assessment data. Med Educ. 2003;37:830-7.
- Axelson RD, Kreiter CD. Rater and occasion impacts on the reliability of pre-admission assessments. Med Educ. 2009;43:1198-202.
- Kane MT, Crooks TJ, Cohen AS. Designing and evaluating standard-setting procedures for licensure and certification tests. Adv Heal Sci Educ Theory Pract. 1999;4:195-207.
- Kramer A, Muijtjens A, Jansen K, Düsman H, Tan L, van der Vleuten C. Comparison of a rational and an empirical standard setting procedure for an OSCE. Objective structured clinical examinations. Med Educ. 2003;37:132-9.