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NGN Talks: Item Development Video Transcript

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Presenter

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The validity of a test is the most important criteria when determining its quality. A test is determined to be valid if it accurately measures what it is supposed to be measuring. When this is not the case, there's no justification for using the test scores for their intended purpose.

The Next Generation NCLEX, or NGN, is designed to test knowledge, skills, and abilities, essential to the safe and effective practice of entry-level nursing including clinical judgment skills. The evaluation of the validity of a test is not a one-time endeavor.

Validity is a continuous process that helps gather evidence and data that determine sound scoring methods. To support the validity of the NGN, several questions need to be answered with evidence or theories throughout the test development process.

First, why include clinical judgment on the NGN? Research, literature review, and pilot studies identified the need for high-stakes nursing licensure exams to include a focus on clinical judgment.

For example, the NCSBN strategic practice analysis confirmed sound clinical judgment skills are required for nearly half of the tasks performed by entry-level nurses. Next, it needs to be asked, can you develop items measuring clinical judgment?

NCSBN brought together experts from measurement, nursing content, and technology fields to imagine item prototypes that could potentially measure clinical judgment. With this knowledge, a team of dedicated nurses began writing item prototypes that maps to the clinical judgment model.

Based on usability studies and focus group studies on the new items, nursing students, professional nurses, and nursing educators indicated that the items were more realistic and a better fit for the type of work they encounter in their internships, practicums, and entry-level practice.

After this, it should be asked, do the NGN items reflect clinical judgment skill? Beginning in July 2017, NCSBN presented a special research section with NCLEX-RN administration. The special research section is intended to collect data on new item types that could expand or enhance the measurement of entry-level nursing competence including clinical judgment.

Based on this data, the focus of NGN research will be developing scoring rules that are appropriate for providing evidence of nursing competence. Another question that needs to be answered is, is the NGN exam reliable? Reliability refers to the degree to which a kid's test score are stable if he or she took different versions of the test at different times assuming his or her ability does not change.

Reliability is a necessary condition for validity. The NGN research will evaluate reliability using different methods that are appropriate for the test and intended use of the results. The final question to ask is, does only nursing knowledge, skills, and abilities contribute to a candidate's score?

Usability studies show that the new items were easily comprehended and simple to use by the candidates' population. This is critical to the validity of new items in order to ensure that item difficulty is driven by the nature of item content and required skills and not by irrelevant features of item presentation such as poor design or ambiguous response methods.

NCSBN will also conduct a lab study to ensure that the cognitive process that a candidate engages in while respond to NGN items align well with the clinical judgment model. In summary, test validity is a degree to which evidence and theory support interpretations of test scores.

It is an ongoing and a multifaceted process. The NGN project will continuously gather validity evidence to support the inference based on the data. You can learn more about NGN project at ncsbn.org.