



UNIVERSITY OF KELANIYA - SRI LANKA
Faculty of Medicine
DEPARTMENT OF SURGERY

GUIDELINES FOR THE PREPERATION OF A SURGICAL PORTFOLIO FOR MEDICAL STUDENTS

- A portfolio is a record of your learning experience.
- It is used to reflect on your learning exercises during the appointment.
- A portfolio is a self-prepared collection of learning material, reflective notes and additional reading you did during the appointment.
- A portfolio **does not need** to have a standard format.
- It is best used to document the learning activities that are not formally available through text books (eg: bedside procedures such as NG tube insertion).
- A portfolio **is not** a reproduction of theoretical content already found on text books.
- It can be a collection of hand written notes and does not need to be a formally printed book.
- It is a demonstration of your enthusiasm to learn the subject.

Components of a portfolio entry:

- 1. What was the learning event?**
- 2 What did I learn?**
- 3. What more should I learn?**
- 4. How can I learn it?**
- 5. Evidence for learning**

Example of a learning exercise to be entered in the portfolio:

Learning event:

You observe a patient with a laceration on the forehead being sutured under local anaesthesia at the PCU.

- Document a short history and a description of the management of the patient.

What did I learn

- Describe the activity with emphasis on specific points such as –
 - What was used for cleaning,
 - How the area was prepared (antiseptic),
 - What agent, method and the dosage of the local anaesthesia
 - What was the suture material used
 - What type of sutures were put
 - What instruments were used
 - What medication was prescribed following suturing (analgesics, antibiotics)
 - Whether any investigations were ordered (eg: X-rays)
 - What advice was given on suture removal

What more can I learn

- Add your own 'reflective thoughts' on the above points (compare and contrast)
 - Types of wounds and different methods of wound cleaning
 - What is the optimal time to attend to different wounds (simple skin laceration vs compound fracture)
 - Different methods of anaesthesia and the dosage of local anaesthetics/ How the anaesthetics work/ what are the complications you may come across/ with adrenaline vs without adrenaline – why? Etc.
 - What are the different suture material available/ which type and size is indicated for different sites in the body
 - Pros and cons of different suture material (Braided vs non braided/ absorbable vs non-absorbable)
 - What are the available needle types – which type for which tissues?
 - What were the instruments needed for a simple suturing? – forceps/ needle holders/ scissors (with photos)
 - What are the different methods of suturing and what are the pros and cons of each (simple interrupted vs continuous/ mattress vs simple/ subcuticular)
 - When will a x ray be required / when is examination under anaesthesia needed?
 - How to decide on the optimal time frame for suture removal.

How can I learn?

- Reflect on available avenues to gather knowledge in areas you considered above as necessary to learn
- The best way to acquire knowledge in this type of a skill based scenario is the clinical setting:
 - Spend more time in the operating theatre and observe how different sutures and needles are utilized during procedures and learn the basis.
 - Collect the literature that comes with the needles and sutures for reference
 - Read review articles targeted for medical students and junior doctors on local anesthesia and skin closure.
 - Compare and contrast what you observed in the A & E to what happens in a routine theatre.
 - Talk to scrub nurses and surgical registrars to get familiar with instruments.
 - Refer to surgical manuals (eg: Pye's surgical handicraft). Choosing the correct material to read is also a skill that you are expected to develop through this exercise.

Evidence for learning

- You can add the reading material you referred to obtain this knowledge.
- If you are interested you may do some background reading on sutures and wound management (journal articles) and add them to build up on this knowledge.
- During the appointment you can add similar cases you see, articles you read or questions you attempt in this area and compare them with the index case.

- Keep building up the portfolio in this manner to demonstrate your effort in learning. This will also improve your knowledge in a substantial manner since it's a self directed exercise.
- You can include any topic you feel important as a section.
- Similarly, you can include interesting cases, experience you have in theater, endoscopy and ward procedures.

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