

# Integrated Curriculum Evaluation Exercise

## Common Avoidable Mistakes

Anita C. Mercado, MD  
ICEE Director

# Mistakes to Avoid in Clinical Skills Examinations

## Use Proper Physical Examination Technique

### 1. Position yourself and the patient properly

Example: Perform heart and abdomen exams with patient supine; stand on patient's right side

### 2. Never examine through/over or around a gown

Example: Your hands/stethoscope should always be on the patient's skin

# Mistakes to Avoid in Clinical Skills Examinations

## Physical Exam

**3. If you examine an organ system, perform all the basic maneuvers of that system**

Example: Heart exam includes heart auscultation and PMI localization;  
lung exam includes auscultation and percussion

**4. Drape the patient properly, ensuring neither insufficient nor excessive patient exposure**

Example: Use drape and gown to frame the exam window (xiphoid to iliac crest for abdomen)

# Mistakes to Avoid in Clinical Skills Examinations

## Assessment and Plan

**5. Your diagnosis (even if correct) must be justified by pertinent +/- data on HX and PE**

Example: Diagnosis of thyroid disease must include thyroid disease questions and a thyroid gland exam during the encounter

**6. Plan must relate to and be justified by diagnosis**

Example: Ordering a stress test must be accompanied by some cardiac diagnosis

# Mistakes to Avoid in Clinical Skills Examinations

## Documentation

**7. Note must match what was actually done in patient encounter**

Example: Document only what you asked or performed

## Approach to the Patient

**8. Approach patient as you would in real life**

Example: Do not find yourself explaining later: “If it had been a real patient, I would have...”