

# A Thematic Analysis of SIPPA ER Clinical Field Assessment Reports to Inform IMG Practice Readiness Assessment Programs

Avani Saxena<sup>2</sup>, Carla Fehr<sup>2</sup>, Dr. Jon Witt<sup>1,2</sup>

Department of Emergency Medicine<sup>1</sup>, College of Medicine<sup>2</sup>, University of Saskatchewan

## INTRODUCTION

- Canada has attempted to address the shortage of physicians in rural areas by recruiting international medical graduates (IMGs)<sup>1</sup>. Saskatchewan (SK) has a substantial rural population and the highest IMG physician population (52%) in Canada<sup>2</sup>.
- Alternative licensure pathways for IMGs are “practice readiness assessment” (PRA) programs utilized in many provinces to help address these physician shortages. Saskatchewan International Physician Practice Assessment (SIPPA) is SK’s PRA program<sup>3</sup>.

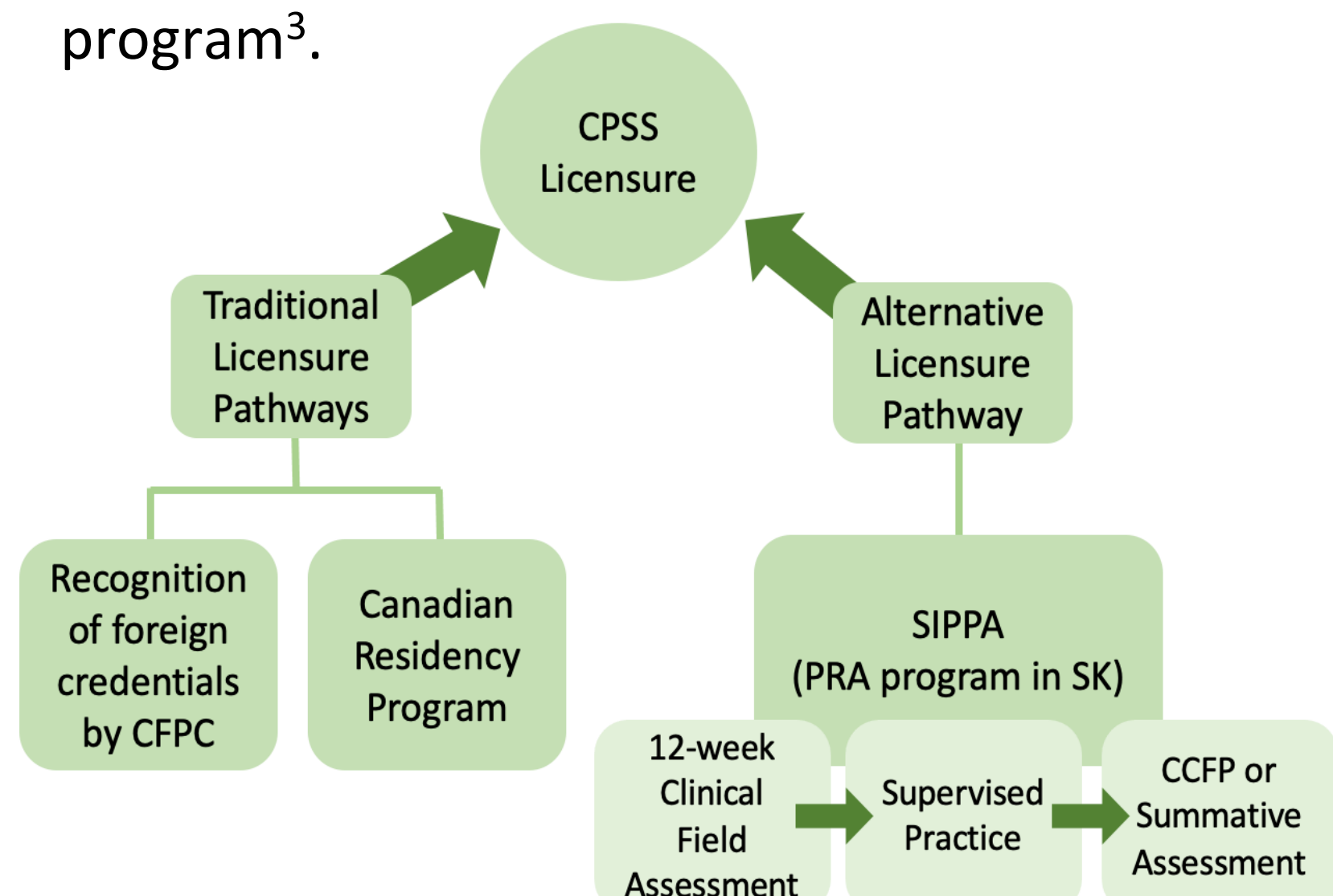


Figure 1. IMG Licensure Pathways in SK

- Currently, there are 257 SIPPA graduates in SK; the majority (78%) practice in rural or regional areas<sup>4</sup>.
- The lack of literature on alternative licensure pathways warrants attention to ensure competent and safe care in underserved areas, especially regarding rural emergency room (ER) practice by IMG family physicians.
- This study aims to identify IMG family physician strengths and challenges during the SIPPA ER assessment to inform IMG PRA programs.

## OBJECTIVES

- Identify the common strengths and areas in need of improvement among IMGs in SIPPA
- Generate actionable recommendations for PRA programs on how to address common competency gaps

## METHODS

**Sample:** De-identified reports (n=100, 2019-2021) containing feedback on SIPPA candidates’ performance during their Clinical Field Assessment period (8-10 shifts in an ER setting within one six-week block)

### Analysis:

- Qualitative – inductive thematic analysis of narrative feedback, followed by categorization of themes into Family Medicine (FM) CanMEDS roles (Figure 2)
- Quantitative – descriptive statistics for communication and professionalism checklist (Figure 3)

## RESULTS

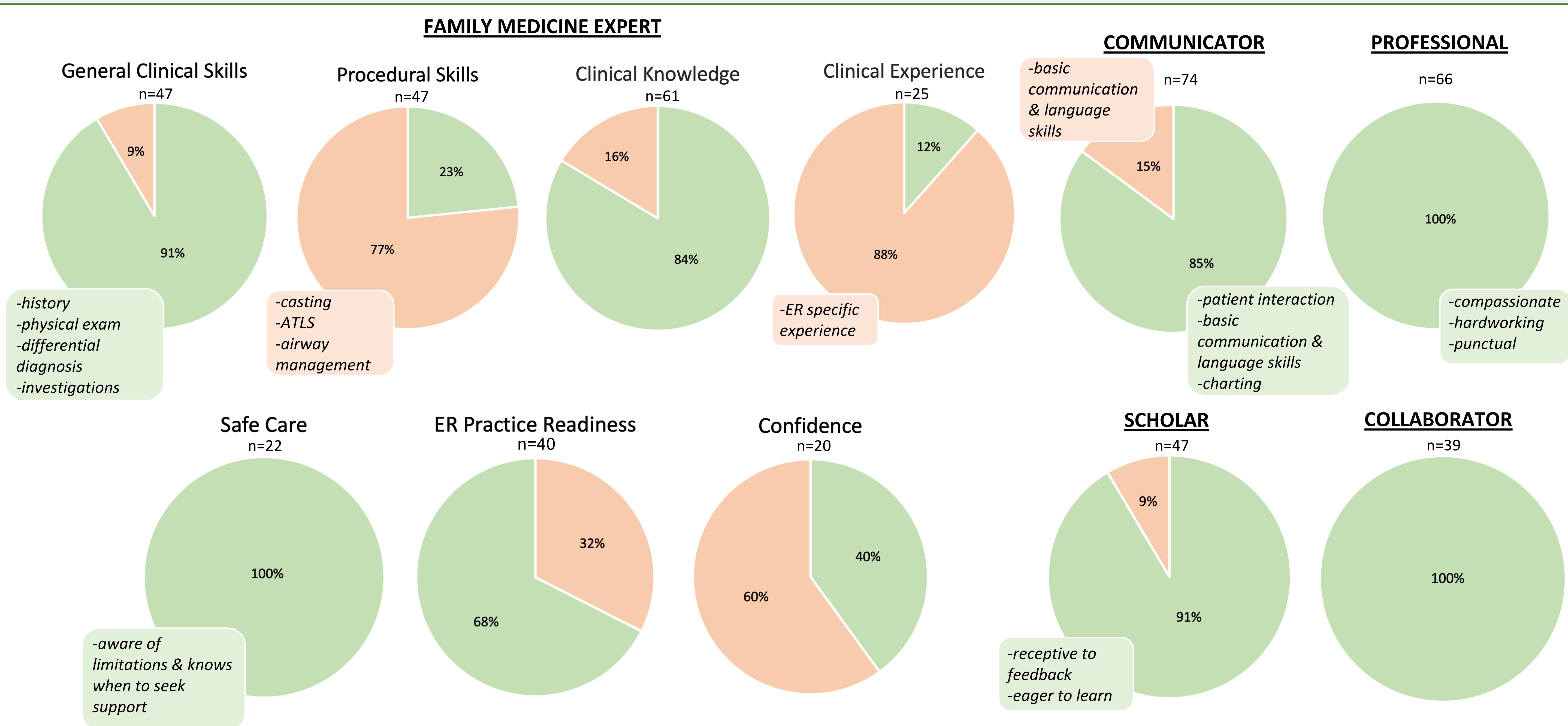


Figure 2. Representation of themes and selected subthemes (those that appear in >10% total reports) from inductive thematic analysis of narrative feedback in Clinical Field Assessment reports. Themes are categorized into FM CanMEDS roles: FM expert, professional, communicator, scholar, collaborator (leader and health advocate roles were not represented in reports).

### Figure 2 Legend:

- Frequency of positive comments reflecting theme (n=# reports in which theme appeared)
- Frequency of negative comments reflecting theme (n=# reports in which theme appeared)
- Subthemes reflecting positive comments that appeared in >10% total reports (n=100)
- Subthemes reflecting negative comments that appeared in >10% total reports (n=100)

Basic Communication Ability	% Reports	Professionalism	% Reports
Candidate easily understands information	100%	Exhibits professional qualities, committed to patient well-being	100%
Patients did not have difficulty understanding candidate	97%	Respectful of team members	100%
Colleagues did not have difficulty understanding candidate	95%	Maintains appropriate professional boundaries	100%
Quality of spoken English did not impede communication	97%	Appreciates professional, legal, and ethical codes of practice	*97%
Appropriate non-verbal communication	99%		

Figure 3. Frequency of reports that responded “yes” to communication and professionalism checklist questions in Clinical Field Assessment reports. \*remaining 3% responded “N/A”

## CONCLUSIONS

### Summary of findings:

- Strengths:** general clinical skills and knowledge, safe care, communication, professionalism, self-directed learning (scholar), collaboration
- Challenges:** procedural skills, clinical experience (particularly ER-specific), confidence

### Minimal extant literature to confirm or refute findings:

- Two studies found that rural physicians’ lack of comfort with aspects of trauma care is likely linked to insufficient exposure to rural practice and ER during training<sup>5</sup> and low volume of patients in rural ERs<sup>6</sup>

### Important to note:

- FM residents in Canada also have skill gaps, but these are dissimilar to SIPPA candidates; the College of Family Physicians of Canada is planning on increasing FM residency length<sup>7,8</sup>

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Address procedural skill gaps through Casted, ATLS, & Airway Management courses
- Increase ER exposure to improve ER practice-readiness
- Improve confidence through mentorship and coaching support

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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