



Sensing Change: On Adding a Psychological Touch of Grit to Conventional Medical School Selection Criteria [Letter]

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Syeda Zoha Zehra Rizvi ¹
Syeda Sakina Zehra ²

¹Jinnah Sindh Medical University, Karachi, Pakistan; ²Karachi Medical and Dental College, Karachi, Pakistan

Dear editor

We have read the paper entitled “Effects of Grit on the Academic Performance of Medical Students” by Alzerwi¹ published in *Advances in Medical Education and Practice*. We congratulate and thank the author for bringing this issue, and follow-up to the article.

The data for this study were collected when the students were beginning their academic year, and also because this study is a cross-sectional study, the participants referred to their previous year’s activities in the survey. Hence, the question arises of whether their current grit scores has affected their performance or the activities left them with their current grit scores. Therefore, based on this study it is uncertain to use grit scores in predicting especially the academic properties of the participants.

Grit scores can also secondarily predict other important outcomes² like passion and aim for pursuing medicine in the future. This can help in addressing an important issue of abandonment of practice by female graduates, influenced by family pressure, in Pakistan,³ and also reduce the number of drop-outs by enrolling only the most dedicated applicants.

The author did not brief about the questions he used in the questionnaire to illustrate how he matched perseverance and distraction to grit. Moreover, questions about aspired specialty could also be included in the survey because the specialties do give an idea about the resilience of the applicants.

Saudi Arabia is a male-dominant country with under-representation of females in the workforce, requiring them to be more resilient to achieve the desired positions in the society, can also be attributed to the results highlighted in this study of females proving to be grittier than their male counterparts even though they showed less research participation.

While noticing that the p-value given in this article when the author compared grit scores with age was $p=0.22$, the author having found no significant correlation between the two, we went on to seek the literature and found that Pena and Duckworth⁴ in their study have identified a positive relationship between absolute age and grit-perseverance subscale with a p-value of $p<0.001$.

The author discussed the reason for lower academic performance and higher repeat status of clinical students being summative assessments that are more

Correspondence: Syeda Zoha Zehra Rizvi
Jinnah Sindh Medical University, B-349,
Block 6, Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Karachi,
Pakistan
Tel +923342721995
Email syedazohazehra@gmail.com

demanding towards an individual student. Furthermore, we have found evidence that experiencing death takes an emotional toll on the students⁵ besides the exhaustion they face due to wards-rotation. We suggest studies conducted that relate this emotional toll and exhaustion with Grade-Point-Average and repeat status of clinical students.

Since an inverse relationship between research participation and GPA has been proposed by the author, we endorse these variables to be taken separately from each other to check for their independent effects on the grit scores.

In conclusion, we are looking forward to more focused studies and more inclusive studies in terms of variables, involving grit because these studies can be attributed to many factors in a medical career and can have extensive applications.

Disclosure

The author reports no conflicts of interest in this communication.

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