

EDITORIAL

IS ENTRY TEST NEEDED FOR MEDICAL COLLEGE ADMISSIONS?

Entry test for medical students is a good idea because of two reasons: firstly to align our educational system with modern requirements keeping pace with international standards; and secondly to nullify the bias caused by different levels of scrutiny employed by various educational boards. However, it required that the Government started to develop a uniform, modernized education system which would eventually make entry tests unnecessary. But unfortunately, this has not happened. We still have different education systems (F.Sc., A level etc.) and still the students are judged by different yardsticks by educational boards.

It is natural that a student coming through conventional route (matriculation, F.Sc.) finds entry tests more difficult. They are used to subjective questions and cramming usually plays an important role. When they face objective questions in entry test which needs deep understanding of the subject and quick thinking, some of them may not be able to perform to a level equivalent to their F. Sc. result. It is understandable that they feel aggrieved.

However, a study has shown that the results of FSc and entry test are consistent in approximately all the percentage groups who got above 70% marks in FSc. Consistency was only disturbed in students who acquired 61-70% marks in FSC and entry test. It should also be kept in mind even if there are only a few who do not perform well in entry test, they can appear to be a significant number due to coverage given in electronic, print, and social media.

So the question is: should the entry test be discontinued? The simple answer is no due to reasons already discussed above. However, the Education Departments should start modernizing the curricula and examination system

at least from 9th class onwards so that entry tests can gradually be phased out.

There is also a debate about the weightage given to entry tests. Currently it is 50:50. My suggestion is that it may be readjusted to 60% F. Sc. marks and 40% entry test marks. However, as modernization of curricula and examination system takes place, this ratio may be revised.

Dr. Abdul Haque

Professor of Pathology

Director Advances Studies and Research

The University of Faisalabad

REFERENCES:

Bhatti MA and M Anwar JPMA 62: 664; 2012