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Determinants of academic performance of medical students in Sri Lankan universities

In spite of the highly competitive admission policy to a medical faculty a substantial number fail university examinations and is unable to graduate with the batch. Hence the research was aimed at finding the per-entry variables which affect academic performance in the university. The Colombo university was selected as the oldest faculty and most of the students had entered with very high marks at the A Level examination. The study was confined to the academic performance at the first and final examinations of 1989/90 and 1990/91 cohorts of students.

Logistic regression analysis was used to identify the variables which predict academic performance in the university. The categorical variables identified were used to group the students and compare the aggregate marks at A level and final examination among these groups using T-test for independent samples.

Attempt is the most important factor which predicts the academic performance at the second MBBS examination. Students entered in their first attempt had scored high marks at the A Level examination and they did better than the repeaters at the first and final examinations. These students passed both university examinations too with classes. This suggests that it is not advisable to repeat the A Level examination to enter a medical faculty other than in exceptional cases where the studies during the first attempt were interrupted due to ill health, family problems etc.

The results of the second examination is the most important factor which predicts academic performance at the final examination.