**Development of a Situational Judgement Test for Entry into Australian General Practice Training**

**Background**

In 2014, approximately 2400 junior doctors applied to enter Australian General Practice Training (AGPT). The number of applicants to AGPT is growing annually, thus it is an increasingly urgent requirement to effectively differentiate between applicants on the basis of the key skills and attributes required to be an effective General Practitioner (GP) in Australia. Since 2010, significant updates have been made to AGPT policy relating to recruitment of GPs, and as a result the methodology now comprises a situational judgement test (SJT) and a multiple-mini interview (MMI). This development represents a ground-breaking development in postgraduate selection internationally.

SJT is designed to assess individuals’ judgement regarding situations encountered in the workplace. In this context, applicants are presented with a set of hypothetical work-based scenarios that they are likely to encounter as a GP trainee, and asked to make judgements about possible responses. There is strong evidence within healthcare settings to suggest that appropriately designed SJTs are useful to assess for a range of professional attributes, and are predictive of performance in both medical training and future practice.\(^1\), \(^2\)

Based on Work Psychology Group’s success in developing and evaluating SJTs in GP recruitment in the UK, their expertise in medical selection, and their extensively published peer-reviewed research on these topics, they were commissioned to develop, implement and evaluate the SJT.

**Action Plan**

Work Psychology Group worked in close consultation with AGPT subject matter experts to scope and design the SJT. Following this consultation, three key domains were identified to be targeted by the SJT: Analytical/Problem Solving Skills; Professional/Ethical Attributes; and Clinical Reasoning. Within the current selection process, the SJT scores make up 50% of the total selection score, with an MMI comprising the other 50%.

Following the design and review of the SJT, evaluation was undertaken to ensure that the SJT is sufficiently reliable and effective to select for AGPT, and that it predicts long-term performance in GP training.

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Outcomes

Following piloting in 2009, the SJT was first used operationally within three regional training providers in 2010. Since 2011, the SJT has been used operationally as part of national recruitment. Year-on-year, psychometric analysis of the SJT has shown that the test is reliable, valid and able to differentiate between applicants. This suggests that the SJT provides a robust selection methodology for AGPT and adds significant value in the selection process. Applicant perceptions of the test have been consistently positive, with the majority of applicants indicating that they perceive the test to be fair, relevant and effective.

Regarding the long-term predictive validity of the AGPT selection process, the relationships between the SJT and MMI with end-of-training assessment performance were examined by Work Psychology Group in 2014. Both the SJT and MMI were found to be statistically significant predictors of future exam performance, and to provide incremental validity (i.e. added ‘unique’ value) over each other. Particularly of note, both the SJT and MMI were found to be positively associated with the OSCE, which is particularly encouraging owing to its high fidelity nature. Therefore findings indicate that, although measuring different constructs, the SJT and MMI are complimentary; an applicant’s proficiency in one assessment is likely to reflect broadly their proficiency in the other.

Overall, the results of the predictive validation study provide strong evidence to suggest that the AGPT selection process successfully identifies those who are likely to achieve success at the end-of-training assessment stage.