Predictive Validity of the SJT component of the UK Clinical Aptitude Test

Client: The UK Clinical Aptitude Test (UKCAT) consortium.

Summary

Work Psychology Group (WPG) was commissioned to explore the relationship between the Situational Judgement Test (SJT) component of the UK Clinical Aptitude Test (UKCAT) and medical school performance. The findings provided positive evidence of the UKCAT SJT's predictive validity and supports its implementation as a cost-effective method to screen out lower performing applicants in future years.

Objective

WPG was commissioned to examine the relationship between the UKCAT SJT and medical and dental students' in-training performance; more specifically to answer the question 'how well is the SJT was able to predict future performance?' The commission recognised our extensive experience within healthcare selection - and the UKCAT in particular - and our renowned psychometric expertise.

Approximately 25,000 medical and dental school applicants complete the UKCAT each year. The UKCAT consists of a number of cognitive tests and an SJT which is used to assess behaviours that have been identified as important for success as medical and dental students.

The UKCAT SJT was introduced in 2013 in response to increasing emphasis on values-based recruitment in healthcare globally, in addition to the need to assess behavioural attributes as part of selection processes.

The SJT was developed by WPG in collaboration with key stakeholders and allows medical and dental schools' admissions teams to examine applicants' situational judgements in the context of the core competencies that are important during their training.

Our Approach

To obtain tutor ratings of student performance, we developed a bespoke survey which was cascaded to educational tutors from four participating medical and dental schools. Tutors were asked to rank each student under their tutelage, on the three behavioual attributes assessed in the SJT (Integrity, Perspective Taking and Team Involvement), when comparing the student to the entire first year cohort.

An average tutor rank was then calculated for each student. In addition, we also asked tutors to provide an overall judgement as to whether the student was "Particularly Promising", "Average" or "Likely to Struggle".

Results and Outcome

Our analysis demonstrated that student SJT scores were positively related to mean supervisor ratings and overall judgments.

When students were grouped into bands based on their SJT scores, students in the top band received significantly higher tutor ratings than all other students, thus demonstrating that the SJT is a valid predictor of future ratings of medical and dental school performance. In addition, students who were identified by tutors as "Likely to Struggle" generally received lower scores on the SJT, which again demonstrates the that the SJT is a valid predictor of future ratings.

These findings provide positive evidence of the UKCAT SJT's predictive validity and supports its implementation as a cost-effective method to screen out lower performing applicants in future years.

Continuing Work

We will continue to support UKCAT in assessing the longitudinal relationship between SJT scores and in-training performance, as students continue to progress through medical and dental training.

Testimonial

"UKCAT has been working with WPG since the trial of our Situational Judgement Test in 2012. The development of the SJT necessitated a strong partnership between the WPG and medical/dental schools ensuring that scenarios used are relevant and fit for purpose. Through an ongoing research programme WPG and UKCAT have been able to give schools a growing confidence to use this subtest within selection. The international standing of the WPG provides us with the expertise we require to continually have an eye to the future development of the test."

Rachel Greatrix, Chief Operating Officer, UKCAT