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A Final Study on the Outgoing Version of the MCAT

As *ASPE eNews* readers are aware, the Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT) is a gatekeeper metric used to evaluate applicants to American medical schools and MD-PhD programs. The MCAT has been in use since the 1960s, and now the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) is rolling out for applicants its first major revision since 1991. Few assessments have undergone the systematic, rigorous scrutiny that the MCAT has in order to determine how well it predicts subsequent medical school performance. Entirely understandable, because if such a metric actually existed, it would save millions of dollars annually for medical schools admissions committees and more in remediation programs and other program elements.

According to the committee responsible for recommending changes to the MCAT, the latest version will introduce new sections to assess the psychological, social, and biological foundations of behavior and critical analysis and reasoning skills. How well it will meet its objective is still several years away. However [in the attached study](#), authors concluded that the most recent version of the MCAT may not be a predictor of a range of successful outcomes for a key demographic of medical schools: MD/PHD trainees, including those in the 40-odd NIH-funded Medical Scientist Training Programs (MSTPs) across the country. Indeed, the revised objectives may indicate it will be even less predictive than its predecessors. Since MD/PhD trainees can constitute a sizeable proportion of a medical school class (10-20% in some cases), program milestones and outcomes will once again be heavily scrutinized.

We hope you enjoy reading the study.

Full Citation: Bills JL et al. Validity of the medical college admissions test for predicting MD-PhD student outcomes. *Advances in Health Sciences Education*, 21:33-49, 2016.

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