

Personality factors in medical and other students

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Computer programs have been developed which handle data describing non-scholastic factors. The factors provide a method of differentiating between groups in addition to measures of academic achievement. We have adopted the 16PF questionnaire, developed by Professor R.B.Cattell, and have made slight modifications in order to take advantage of pre-existing data collection techniques and also to anglicize it. Despite the fact that the test is well established, we wished to test its relevance over the range of groups with which we deal. During the last two years we have collected data from about 600 undergraduates and postgraduates.

We found degrees of similarity between 1st MB medical undergraduates over a two-year period and some degrees of similarity, but also some differences between 2nd MB medical undergraduates over a three-year period. Differences were noted between these 1st MB and 2nd MB groups. Clinical medical undergraduates from a different medical school were more similar to these 1st MB than to these 2nd MB groups. We have also tested other groups many of whom were non-medical.

Note: The 1962 edition of the 16PF test is copyright in the United Kingdom to the National Foundation for Educational Research, from whom copies of the test, the answer sheet, the scoring key, norm tables and the 16PF test handbook may be obtained.

Our objective in this work was to see if any other factors could be introduced into our MCQ research which might explain differential examination results. The 16PF test seems particularly suitable as it was well developed, and had many factors. Thus, even if only a few factors were useful to us, we would have the data. We had previously failed to find a use for a visual-spatial test (which has only one factor anyway), when all our subjects scored at or about the maximum so that there was no discrimination potential.