

A Linear Educational Study on the Intake of a Single Year into Medical School

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The assessment of students is just as important as the assessment of the product of an industrial process. Both fall broadly into the category of 'quality control'. In a medical school, many disciplines are integrated together to produce qualified doctors and, since alterations and innovations in curricula and teaching are continually being introduced, it is vital that adequate quality control be maintained. Such control should also suggest ways of improving the various courses. We believe that this is best done by a technique of continuous assessment. However, the traditional view of this form of assessment is entirely orientated towards categorizations of students. The corollary to this situation - the control of course material - is not fully appreciated, or exploited. The proper use of a suitable assessment procedure to monitor a course entails planning and automation if such monitoring is to be practicable.

We have conducted a linear study of the year's intake to the Middlesex Hospital Medical School (October 1966), by considering the A level results, the second MB results, and the results obtained in four pathology course examinations for that intake. The last four examinations were of the multiple-choice type.

The paper reported development and use of a discriminant function and reclassification system to group students, using dichotomous scores for A-levels, pass-fail at second MB, BSc status. Inter alia, the results showed that raising A-level requirements would improve pass rates but only by excluding large numbers of students who could pass: also that there were more students who might benefit from a BSc course than were volunteering for it.