**OP 42: The Common General Paper at the GCE Advanced Level examination as a predictor of performance in medical school**

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**Background:** Since 2000, all students seeking admission to Sri Lankan universities have to answer a Common General Paper, along with three subjects of their choice, at the GCE Advanced Level (AL) examination. The CGP aims to assess the intellectual ability of students, and their general awareness of the world they live in.

**Objectives:** To determine the relationship between CGP scores and performance in medical school **Methods:** The study sample consisted of medical students in Colombo and Kelaniya entering university in 2002 and 2003. Students were ranked according to the average mark obtained in 2nd year examinations in medical school, and dichotomized according to their presence in the top 30%. The predictive value of CGP scores in determining this outcome was examined using logistic regression in a multivariate analysis that also included AL z-scores, General English grades, sex, year of entry, district of admission and university.

**Results:** AL results and university examination results were matched for 473 students (297 in Colombo, 176 in Kelaniya). CGP marks showed significant positive correlation with AL z-scores and General English grades. All three AL scores and university examination results differed significantly according to university, year of entry, and sex of student, Multivariate analysis showed that higher AL z-scores and female sex were significant predictors of successful outcome, but none of the other variables, including CGP, were significant. All variables together explained only 12% of the variation in outcome (pseudo-R2 = 0.1224). **Conclusions:** CGP scores do not predict student performance in medical school.