TO INTERVIEW OR NOT TO INTERVIEW: WHOM IS THE QUESTION

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The problem:

- CASPA Stats (total ‘mailed’ applicants):
  - ‘07 – ‘08  10,550
  - ‘08 – ‘09  12,216
  - ‘09 – ‘10  14,582
  - ‘10 – ‘11  16,569
  - ‘11 – ‘12  18,510
  - ‘12 – ‘13  19,558

The 5 years since ‘07–‘08: 85% increase in applications
Labor/Time commitment for interviews

- Each session lasts half day
- Multiple 3-person teams plus “host”
  - Average 7-10 persons each session
- In ’12 – ’13 we scheduled 25 interview sessions
- Estimated total interview man hours: 890!
- How to ensure interviewing those with best chance for success, best match for our program
  - Objective, evidence-based screening tool needed
Literature evidence

- Cognitive measures
  - GPA (overall and science)
  - GRE
  - MCAT
- Non-cognitive measures
  - Autobiographical submission (ABS)
    - Personal statement/essay
  - Letters of recommendation/reference
Overall GPA & science GPA strongly correlate with graduate school performance\textsuperscript{1-10}

Some also found a correlation between GPA and clinical performance\textsuperscript{1,5,7,11}
- Correlation weakens over time after graduation

To a lesser extent, standardized admissions testing (MCAT, GRE) also correlate with graduate school performance\textsuperscript{1,4,7,8,11}
## GPA as a Predictor of Pre-clinical and Clinical Performance

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<th>Pre-clinical</th>
<th>Clinical</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dore, et al.</td>
<td>Y</td>
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NON-COGNITIVE MEASURES

- Letters of reference do not correlate with graduate school performance\(^5,11\)

- Some studies have shown a correlation between ABS and clinical performance (but not didactic)\(^3,5,10\)
  - Horizontal vs. vertical scoring methods
  - Horizontal scoring improves validity and reliability of ABS as a screening tool\(^3\)
ABS Scoring

- Vertical (traditional)
  - One person scores all essays from one applicant

- Horizontal
  - One person scores one essay from all applicants

Horizontal scoring improves validity and reliability of the ABS as a screening tool\(^3\)
ABS

- Off-site, non-proctored ABS ratings are higher than on-site, proctored ABS ratings\(^6\)
- On-site ratings improve with more time\(^6\)
- Validity (independence and veracity) of off-site ABS must be questioned
  - Ghostwriters
  - Influence of friends and family
# ABS as a Predictor of Pre-clinical and Clinical Performance

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*Using horizontal scoring method
Rutgers Physician Assistant Applicant Screening

**ACADEMIC PREPARATION (SCORING)**

- Overall GPA 0-10 pts
- Science GPA 0-12
- GPA last 30 0-14
- >24 credits science (Y/N) 0-2
- Science Prep 0-5
- Highest degree 0-3

Maximum possible for academic prep: 46 pts

Scoring of this portion done by admissions coordinator: cut-point for automatic rejection, no further screening required
PRIOR EXPERIENCE (SCORING)

- Direct Patient Contact Hrs 0-10 pts
- Community Service Hrs 0-10
- PA exposure/shadowing 0-10

Total possible: 30 pts

This calculation plus all remaining evaluation done by a faculty member
REFERENCE LETTERS (SCORING)

For each of the 3 submitted references

- Appropriate choice 0-2 pts
- Recommends w/o reservation (Y/N) 0-1
- Overall impression 0-3

Total points possible for references: 18 pts
ABS SCORING

- Overall impression of essay: 0-6 pts

Review of scoring (entire application):
- Academic preparation: 46 pts
- Past experience: 30
- References: 18
- Essay: 6

Total: 100 pts
THE GOOD NEWS

- Process has become more objective
  - Concrete, constructive feedback for those not interviewed
- Allows for broader sharing of screening burden across faculty
- Improved consistency in quality of interviews
- Potentially useful over time to statistically evaluate our admissions process
THE BAD NEWS

- Risk that heavy academic preparation weighting screens out potentially attractive applicants
- Inconsistencies between faculty in approach to scoring
  - Scoring of hours for community service and direct health care experience varied widely
  - Smaller variations seen in essay/overall impression and reference evaluation
DIRECT PATIENT EXPERIENCE (HOURS)

- Applicant #1: 2012 (2), 1520, 1028 (2), 1000 (2)
- Applicant #2: 800 (5), 890, 840
- Applicant #3: 450, 440 (4), 400 (2)
COMMUNITY SERVICE (hours)

- Applicant #1: 895, 875, 695, 566, 300, 227,150
- Applicant #2: 140 (2),130, 50 (2),10 (2)
- Applicant #3: 1100 (4), 1000 (2), 100
ESSAY/OVERALL IMPRESSION (SCORES)

- Applicant #1: 5 (5), 4 (2)
- Applicant #2: 5 (4), 4 (2), 3
- Applicant #3: 4 (3), 3 (2), 2 (2)
Final Interview Decision

- Applicant #1: 6 “yes”; 1 “no” (65-76)
- Applicant #2: 3 “yes”; 4 “no” (63-67)
- Applicant #3: 2 “yes”; 5 “no” (61-76)
An association exists between pre-interview screening score & interview score.
Some other things we’ve noticed

- Fewer interviews for faculty
  - Nearly 30% decrease in applicants interviewed
- Faculty aren’t relying solely on the pre-interview score when deciding
  - Scores range 52-91 among applicants invited for an interview ‘12–‘13
QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION
REFERENCES


