

Faculty Paper Presentation

Application Predictors of Successful Initial Passage of the PANCE

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Abstract:

Applying to and attending a PA program requires considerable investment from prospective students and the institutions that admit them. The mission of our Physician Assistant Program (PAP) is “to educate caring, competent, culturally sensitive primary care PAs who practice evidence-based medicine, are leaders in the profession, dedicated to their communities, and devoted to positive transformation of the health care system.” Selecting students most likely to succeed in the program is critical to its success and that of its graduates. Admission decisions may be hampered by lack of valid and reliable indicators to predict successful completion of the PA National Certifying Examination (PANCE) taken shortly after graduation. This exam is a primary criterion for licensure in all 50 states. Our PAP is committed to recruiting and matriculating minority and

disadvantaged students for careers as physician assistants. This commitment may make the selection process particularly difficult, due to the challenges that disadvantaged and minority applicants may have in achieving strong academic records and performing on standardized tests. This study aimed to identify correlates of successfully passing the PANCE on the first attempt by graduates of the PAP. The following indicators are under analysis to determine their relationship to passing the PANCE on first attempt: overall GPA at application, GPA in natural sciences at application, number of natural science credits at application, GRE scores, and months of patient care experience at application. Data has been collected via a retrospective review of admission records for students admitted to the PAP between 1990 and 2004, and their subsequent initial board exam scores. Data has been obtained electronically from PAP admissions records, and from the PANCE database of the National Commission on Certification of PAs, which administers the PANCE. Data was stripped of identifiers before being provided to data analysts. Although previous studies have analyzed factors predicting success on the PANCE, this study is unique in that it looks at long-term data from a program committed to recruitment of minority and disadvantaged students; analysis will include admission predictive factors for minority and non-minority student success on the PANCE.

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