



Sensing Change: On Adding a Psychological Touch of Grit to Conventional Medical School Selection Criteria [Response to Letter]

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Dear editor

I thank Rizvi and Zehra for their valuable critique of my article “Effects of Grit on the Academic Performance of Medical Students: A Cross-Sectional Study at Majmaah University”.¹ The fact that a student’s GPA is calculated at the end of each academic year makes the beginning of the following academic year an excellent time to conduct the study, to ensure that the last reported GPA corresponds to the academic efforts for the previous academic year. Additionally, this study makes no claim regarding the predictive power of the grit score; rather, it examines the association between grit score and academic performance parameters, as explained in the limitations paragraph in the Discussion section of the article. The last paragraph of the Discussion states the need for multivariable linear regression modeling in a multicenter longitudinal study design to assess the predictive power of grit scores, and to quantify the adjusted and standardized beta coefficients of different variables and confounders on the impact of grit on academic performance; however, this study, which is the first to explore this issue in medical schools in Saudi Arabia, serves as a catalyst for such further studies to answer these questions.¹ Regarding the coding of the responses to the questionnaire sections assessing distraction and perseverance, in the Methods section, I followed the standard coding used by Duckworth and Quinn.² Questioning students about their preferred specialty seems inappropriate at this stage, as most students make this decision during internship. Women constitute 51.8% of university students in Saudi Arabia, according to the Ministry of Education, with more than 35,537 female students studying abroad across 57 countries and sponsored by the Ministry of Education in 2014.³ Finally, regarding the relationship between age and grit, this was mentioned in the second paragraph of the Discussion section of the article:

Importantly, there was no statistically significant correlation between age and grit scores, contrasting with the conclusion of the original study by Duckworth et al,⁵ that found that grit scores tended to increase with age when education is controlled for.

In our study, though there was no significant correlation between age and grit scores, the trend was negative. This may be due to the confounding effect of years of repetition, especially given that one-third of the sample were repeaters, ie, repeaters, who tend to have a lower grit score than non-repeaters, also tend to be older than non-repeaters.¹

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Disclosure

The author reports no conflicts of interest in this communication.

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