

English Language Proficiency and Academic performance of First Year Medical Students of Faculty of Medicine, Wayamba University of Sri Lanka

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Introduction

English language is the most effective and common medium of communication globally and most Medical Degrees are conducted in English Medium. In order to improve English language proficiency, universities conduct an induction programme focused on English language at the beginning.

Objective

The main objective was to determine the association between English language proficiency and academic performance of first year medical students.

Methods

A descriptive cross sectional study was conducted in Faculty of Medicine, Wayamba University of Sri Lanka using demographic data, Z scores, results of the Continuous Assessment Test (CAT) during the first semester and English tests of the first year students. Permission was obtained to extract data from the existing databases of the Faculty. Data was analyzed using paired t and spearman correlation tests.

Results

A group of 72 medical students was included in the study where the majority (69%) were females. Means of Z scores of A/L examination (at school) English language test and CAT marks were 1.71(SD±0.13), 60.28(SD±12.74) and 50.02(SD±10.48) respectively. There was significant positive correlation between English language test results with Z scores ($r=0.314$, $p=0.009$) and CAT results ($r=0.546$, $p<0.001$). Comparison (paired t test) of pre and post English course test results revealed that there is a significant improvement in English language proficiency ($p<0.001$, mean=8.7±6.3) after conducting 8 weeks of induction programme.

Conclusions

There was a significant impact of the English language proficiency in academic performance of first year medical students. Induction programme which mainly focused on English language proficiency has significantly improved language skills of first year students.

References

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Key Words

English language, academic performance, medical students, Sri Lanka