



MEDICAL EDUCATION
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Do scores on the new Psychological, Social and Biological foundations of Behavior (PSBB) section of the MCAT 2015 predict medical students' academic performance in behavioral and social sciences (BSS) courses?

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Purpose: The Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT) changed in 2015 to reflect 21st century medical education, and one change was the addition of the new Psychological, Social and Biological Foundations of Behavior (PSBB) section which assesses knowledge that provides a foundation for learning in medical school about the behavioral and socio-cultural determinants of health and health outcomes. Memorial University in 2013-2014 participated in the PSBB validity study to learn how well PSBB scores predict students' academic performance in behavioral and social sciences (BSS) courses and clerkships. **Methods:** All first and second year medical students at Memorial University of Newfoundland were invited to take a prototype PSBB exam and short post-exam survey in fall 2013 and to give permission for their grades in courses that were conceptually related to PSBB content to be included in the study. **Results:** Eighty-one percent of first and 91% of second year medical students participated in the study. We compared prototype PSBB scores to performance in coursework related to BSS. Grades in psychiatry, and neuroscience blocks as well as a course on community health were predicted by prototype PSBB scores (corrected correlations equal .41, .33, and .40, respectively). **Conclusions:** Performance on the PSBB prototype predicted performance in coursework with BSS content. Prediction was stronger for psychiatry and community health than neuroscience coursework, potentially due to the greater alignment of concepts between the PSBB section and related medical school coursework. Future research will evaluate the predictive validity of prototype PSBB scores with performance in psychiatry clerkships.