Admission of medical students in Germany

Wolfgang Hampe, Mirjana Knorr
Student Admission Research Group, Centre for Experimental Medicine, University Hospital Hamburg-Eppendorf, Hamburg, Germany

hampe@uke.de m.knorr@uke.de

In Germany, admission to all governmentally funded medical schools is organized by a central agency called Stiftung für Hochschulzulassung (hochschulstart). Candidates are required to directly send their application to hochschulstart including a rank ordered list of preferred universities.

Forty percent of the available university places are directly allocated, 20% based on high-school grade point average (GPA) and another 20% on the basis of the waiting period since high-school graduation. The remaining 60% of the places can be assigned by the individual faculties. These select their students by very heterogeneous methods, mainly written aptitude tests, grades of individual high-school subjects, work experience, or traditional panel or multiple mini-interviews, all of which have to be combined with GPA as the dominant factor. For the selection process hochschulstart forwards the personal data of the applicants to the faculties at the beginning of August. At the end of September all universities return ranking lists to hochschulstart which now assigns the places for all universities with respect to the prioritization of the candidates.

At Hamburg University we apply two subsequent tests: In a first step more than 1000 applicants preselected by GPA are invited to the HAM-Nat, a multiple-choice test of natural sciences on high-school level. The best 115 participants directly receive a university place. The following 200 applicants with borderline results are invited to a multiple mini-interview which consists of at least eight short interview stations and aims to assess psychosocial skills. At each of the five-minute stations candidates either talk to an interviewer or interact with an actor. The station performance is evaluated by two independent observers on standardized rating scales. Based on the multiple mini-interview results the rank order is modified and the remaining 115 university places are assigned.

Since the past three years the second stage of the admission process includes a situational judgement test (SJT) in addition to the multiple mini-interview. The SJT is a less resource-intensive instrument for measuring psychosocial skills. We will present data on three different types of SJT and discuss their pros and cons.