

Giving Up Rates of Medical Students in West-Germany

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(Abstract)

Since the reform of 1970, medical education in West-German universities takes a minimum of six years. In educational statistics, there is no certain information about giving up rates. There are only estimates and research on that rate published by the German institute for organizing the nation-wide examinations (MCQ) for all medical students (Mainzer Institut für medizinische und pharmazeutische Prüfungsfragen). Those rates include only students who failed the same examination three times.

Other forms of giving up the medical course are not taken into consideration. In the form of two longitudinal studies we have registered the duration of medical education as well as the rate of German students who gave up their medical studies at the Free University of Berlin.

Our sample includes all age groups between 1973 and 1975, and 1976 to 1980. We have tried to reconstruct the course of any single student (of course anonymously). We can give some facts and figures concerning the special conditions of success and failure.

Concept Learning in Medicine

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(Abstract)

Scientific thinking development during medical education calls for the elaboration of the theory of medical learning. Two main aspects are: a) the mental processes being developed during this period and b) the structure of knowledge which is used for learning. It is dealt with the second aspect only as related to medical epistemology - the theory of medical knowledge. The psychology of human learning in medicine has been very thin on ideas about what happens to scientific thinking during the whole period of medical learning.

We have constructed two medical concepts: respiration and diabetes, and corresponding to this structure, the two MCQ tests. It has been shown that structuring knowledge in the form of a "concept" helps both the acquisition of cognitive skills and its retention in the long-term memory.

It is concluded that the concept approach in medical learning is a step forward in the understanding of what happens during all periods of medical education.