

Comparison of emotional intelligence of two groups of medical students and their co-relations

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Emotional intelligence (EI) is identified as the ability to purposely adapt, shape, and select environments through the use of emotionally relevant processes. A high level of EI is essential in the practice of medicine. Many countries adopt different methods to evaluate the level of EI of students applying for medical courses. However in Sri Lanka students are selected for the medical course purely based on academic merit.

The objective of the study was to compare the level of EI of third and first year medical students of the University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka and to determine whether there is a significant correlation between EI and gender, student perception of religiousness, their perception of the level of socialization, motivation to study medicine, island rank at GCE A/L examination, number of siblings and the level of family support.

The Genos Emotional Intelligence Assessment Concise Questionnaire, containing seven sub scales was validated and translated for Sri Lanka, was administered to 245 first and third year medical students. The Genos EI raw scores were analysed using SPSS version 22.0.

Hundred and fourteen were male and 130 female, while 185 were first year students and 60 were third years. The mean total EI score for third year students was 106 (range 44-138). Mean EI score of first years was 124, (range 54-149). The difference between first and third year mean EI scores was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). All the sub categorical scores were significantly lower in third years than in first years.

The difference in the mean EI scores of males and females was not statistically significant ($p = 0.345$). Student perception of their religiousness, their perception of the level of socialization, and their motivation to study medicine significantly correlated with EI ($p < 0.05$). However, the island rank at GCE A/L examination, number of siblings, and the level of family support did not significantly co-relate with EI.

While EI may be a useful aspect to consider in the selection of students for a medical course, steps need to be taken to ensure enhancement of EI throughout the medical course.