Admission Criteria as Predictors of

Student Academic Performance in the College of Nursing

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Abstract

Background: Over the last nine years, there have been many modifications on the applied student selection criteria in the College, in an attempt to determine the most effective combination of criteria in selecting the most competent students. However, these criteria were not systematically studies to suggest an answer. The aim of this study is to examine The College of Nursing – Riyadh (CON-R) admission criteria and to investigate how effective they are in predicting students' academic performance in the pre-entry English Foundation Program (EFP) and in the nursing curriculum. Furthermore, to find out if there is a difference in the academic performance between students selected by the College's English entrance exam (CEEE) and those selected by the National Center for Assessment in Higher Education (NCAHE) exams.

Methods: Information related to admission criteria and academic performance of 581students admitted from 2001–2002 until 2009–2010 was retrieved. Admission criteria included high school average (HS-AVG), high school science average (HS-SAVG), CEEE, the General Aptitude Test (GAT), the Standardize Achievement Admission Test (SAAT), and interviews (INTV). Measures of students' performance in nursing were first semester Grade Point Average (F-GPA), intermediate cumulative GPA (IC-GPA), and graduation GPA (G-GPA). Measure of

performance in the EFP was student grades. Statistical Analysis included descriptive, comparative, and regression analysis.

Results and Conclusion: The study findings suggest that HS-AVG is the most consistent predictor of student performance in nursing. The HS-SAVG is only a weaker duplication of the HS-AVG in terms of student selection. The CEEE proves to be a predicting tool for performance in the EFP. Likewise, it has a prediction component for students' performance upon graduation. In regards to the NCAHE tests, the GAT predicts performance in EFP but not in nursing program. On the other hand, the SAAT is a good tool in predicting performance in the EFP and in first semester of nursing. When conducted in English, INTV are a good selection tool for the EFP, but not for nursing program. In spite of probable external factors, students selected through the CEEE seem to perform better in nursing than those selected by the NCAHE exams.