Selecting for graduate medicine without traditional aptitude testing; Biomedical science as a pathway to graduate medicine

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Background and Aims
Selection of students into medicine programs is based on multiple criteria; academic performance, aptitude testing and interview. Aptitude testing via the UMAT/GAMSAT assesses a student's ability to think critically, problem solve, understand people, and perform abstract non-verbal reasoning. Aptitudes that reflect the qualities required to successfully study and practice medicine. In 2014 a pathway from Biomedical Science into graduate medicine was introduced at Monash University. Students will be selected in late 2015, based on their academic performance in years 1-2 of the Biomedical Science program and on interview. No aptitude tests will be used. The aim of this study is to establish criteria to monitor the progress of this cohort through their graduate medicine studies.

Results
The pathway has concurrently increased the demand for the biomedical science program by 50% and Clearly-in ATAR, 90.02 in 2013 to 95.5 in 2015. A survey of first year students in 2014 indicated that 85% were considering the medicine pathway. This is markedly different to final year students where in 2011 only 33% identified medicine as their career choice, suggesting that the guaranteed pathway has changed the characteristics of the Biomedical Science cohort.

Conclusion
The selection of students for the medicine pathway is a return to < 1991. Except these students have successfully completed a Biomedical Science degree gaining graduate attributes such as critical thinking, problem solving, ability to communicate, work in teams and think ethically. Will they be successful in their medicine studies?