Context: Graduates of colleges of osteopathic medicine (COMs) frequently apply to residency training programs accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education. However, students who have taken the Comprehensive Osteopathic Medical Licensing Examination (COMLEX-USA) rather than the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) may encounter a selection bias when applying to allopathic residency programs.

Objective: To evaluate the correlation between scores on COMLEX-USA and USMLE by COM students who took both examinations.

Methods: Scores were analyzed from a cohort of COM students who took COMLEX-USA Level 1 and USMLE Step 1 and a cohort of students who, during the same time, took COMLEX-USA Level 2 and USMLE Step 2.

Results: At the Kirksville (Mo) College of Osteopathic Medicine of A.T. Still University of Health Sciences, 155 students took both COMLEX-USA Level 1 and USMLE Step 1 and another cohort of 56 students took COMLEX-USA Level 2 and USMLE Step 2. The Pearson product moment correlation of the scores from COMLEX-USA Level 1 and USMLE Step 1 was 0.83 (P<.001) and for COMLEX-USA Level 2 and USMLE Step 2 was 0.70 (P<.001). Scores on USMLE are predicted by the corresponding COMLEX-USA scores using the equations USMLE Step 1 = 67.97 + 0.24 × COMLEX-USA Level 1 (R²=0.68); and USMLE Step 2 = 102.2 + 0.18 × COMLEX-USA Level 2 (R²=0.46).

Conclusion: A method of estimating USMLE scores from COMLEX-USA scores is provided for residency directors of institutions accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education for the evaluation of COM applicants.

J Am Osteopath Assoc. 2006;106:484-485

How to Predict USMLE Scores From COMLEX-USA Scores: A Guide for Directors of ACGME-Accredited Residency Programs

Philip C. Slocum, DO
Janet S. Louder

From the Kirksville (Mo) College of Osteopathic Medicine of A.T. Still University of Health Sciences.
Submitted October 26, 2005; final revision received March 3, 2006; accepted March 27, 2006.
Address correspondence to Philip C. Slocum, DO, Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine of A.T. Still University of Health Sciences, 800 W Jefferson St, Kirksville, MO 63501–1443.
E-mail: pslocum@kcom.edu
Acknowledgments
The authors thank Dixie Tooke-Rawlins, DO, Dean and Vice President of Edward Via Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine in Blacksburg, and Jane C. Johnson, MA, Director of Research Support, Kirksville (Mo) College of Osteopathic Medicine of A.T. Still University of Health Sciences. Without their insight and assistance, this project would never have been successful.

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