To determine the variables that predict a physical therapy student’s first time success on the National Physical Therapy Exam (NPTE), and to determine variables that correlate to students who are not successful on the first attempt of the NPTE.

Purpose

Kume et al; 2013

Purpose: To verify previous findings of predictors of NPTE first time pass rate after updates and data from the examination in 2013 and also analyze the significance of pre and post-admission variables not yet studied.

Wolden et al; 2015

Purpose: To determine the relationships between first attempt NPTE performance and physical therapy student variables.

Meiners and Rashi; 2019

Purpose: To explore whether certain variables were predictive of students’ first-time score on the NPTE.

Riddle et al; 2009

Purpose: This retrospective population-based cohort study was conducted to determine if students who did not pass the NPTE based on their program difficulty and institutional status by Carnegie classification.

Kume et al; 2012

Purpose: To investigate the predictors of first-time success on the NPTE in order to best align required admission and persistent academic standards. Future research should validate or refute previous findings and investigate additional predictor variables for first time success on the NPTE to allow students and faculty to better prepare for this assessment.

Analysis

Kume et al found that significant predictors of first time pass rate on the NPTE included mGRE (rGRE), vGRE, and qGRE scores, as well as a first year graduate GPA of 3.25 or higher. Similarly, Wolden et al reported that first year PT GPA, were significant predictors of first time success; the researchers also reported that overall PT GPA was a predictor of first time success on the NPTE. Meiners and Rashi enhanced the findings of Wolden et al such that first year PT GPA was the only significant predictor of first time success on the NPTE. Both studies determined that PT Clinical Performance Instrument (CPI) scores were not significant in predicting first time success on the NPTE. Riddle et al determined that academic difficulty, students who failed a program course or who were put on academic probation, was a predictor of students who were unsuccessful in passing the NPTE. Academic status of a student in an accredited Physical Therapy program may also correlate to NPTE success.

Kume et al; 2013

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Conclusion

First year professional phase GPA was consistently the most significant predictor of first time success on the NPTE. Other predictors of first time success on the NPTE included gGRE, vGRE, and overall professional PT GPA. Future research should aim to validate these findings to notify students of the importance of predictors that lead to first time success. Future research should also assess the potential factors influencing those students who were not successful on the first attempt of the NPTE in order for PT programs to do the following: determine criteria for entry and progression throughout the program, and consider allocation of resources to assist students early in the program to promote success on the NPTE.

Future Research

Future research is projected to add to the cohort of graduates to validate or refute the previous variables that predict success on the NPTE: pre-professional science course grades (BIO 110, BIO 330) and professional phase GPA (1st year Fall, 2nd year Spring). Future research will assess the number of mastery quiz retake needs, the number of mastery practical retake needs in the first year, and the length of academic probation of students’ to determine correlation to the NPTE.

References