Author's response to reviews

**Title:** GAMSAT: A 10-year retrospective analysis

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**Author's response to reviews:** see over
We have revised the document GAMSAT: A 10-year retrospective analysis as follows, according to the two reviews received.

**Reviewer 1**

**Major compulsory revisions**

1. A table of means for 2005 – 2014 has been added.
2. The following sentence has been added in the Discussion to address this point:

   Apart from quality control, one of the reasons for publishing annual reports on the outcomes of the GAMSAT results is to provide medical schools with information (including apparent biases in test performance) to allow them to make informed decisions on how they use GAMSAT in their selection processes.

**Minor essential revisions**

3. ‘outcome variables’ has been replaced with ‘variables’
4. The word ‘valid’ has been removed.

**Discretionary revisions**

5. An explanation for the double-weighting of Section 3 has been included.
6. The words ‘of individual items’ has been removed as this may have been misleading. The text which follows is appropriate for the discussion.

**Reviewer 2**

**Major compulsory revisions**

1. Information has been added on the proportions of repeat takers with a general indication of performance on a subsequent occasion. An in-depth study of performance on subsequent occasions is currently the subject of an investigation by one of the authors and will inform a separate publication as it is an important topic.
2. The analysis suggested has been undertaken and reported in the results and discussion. Due to the lengthy and complex nature of the associated tables these have been included in an appendix.

**Minor essential revisions**

3. Most of these points relate to the use of inferential statistics rather than just descriptive. We have used inferential statistics within a year’s cohort, but we feel that descriptive statistics are sufficient to indicate trends across time. It is beyond the scope of our aims for this paper
to undertake all these complex analyses. However, it could be the subject of a follow-up paper to investigate and report in greater depth on the relationships between GAMSAT scores and the demographic and educational variables over time. In 2. above we have reported on the within-cohort results for 2014.

4. A statement to cover the difference between a Bachelors degree and an Honours degree in Australia has been included. The issue of repeat takers needs to be dealt with in depth as indicated in 1. above. Identifying repeat takers over time and analysing their performance on each occasion is a complex undertaking and as indicated above will be the subject of a separate study.

5. All references have been amended as suggested.

**Discretionary revisions**

6. A statement is included clarifying the years of relevant analyses. Suggestions re lines 40 and 46 have been undertaken.

7. Re line 82, the candidates can respond to one or more statements on the same topic. Other suggestions have been incorporated. The UKCAT has not been referenced in this paper because it is used for entry to undergraduate medical courses. Similarly the UMAT is not generally referenced, except in one example in the discussion. Both UKCAT and UMAT are more general aptitude tests, whereas GAMSAT has a curriculum focus in Section 3.

8. All suggestions have been incorporated.

9. The reference to Person separation index has been removed. All other suggestions have been incorporated.

10. The words ‘publically available’ have been added as indicated. As stated previously we have attempted to use references for graduate entry medical courses, rather than undergraduate entry. Whilst being aware of the 2013 and the 2014 UKCAT references we have not included them for this reason. The MCAT reference is indeed an old one, but of all the available papers on MCAT we feel that this one is the most relevant.

With a few exceptions, as detailed above, we have clarified or incorporated all the reviewers’ suggestions. Thank you for the opportunity to do this.

Yours sincerely

Annette Mercer

On behalf of Brendan Crotty, Louise Alldridge, Luc Le and Veronica Vele