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Comparative study between the attitudes of Feeder Stream and First Year medical students toward the importance of understanding classical Greek and Latin in the development of an anatomical and medical vocabulary

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First Year medical student often finds newly introduced anatomical and medical terminologies challenging. This might be because 75% of terminologies are derived from classical languages such as Greek and Latin, languages that are rarely taught nowadays in schools as part of their regular curriculum. Another factor that might contribute to difficulty in acquiring these terminologies could be decreased time the students spend in the dissecting room, this might impair students' knowledge and understanding of anatomical relationships thus impacting the acquisition of terminologies. Until now, there have been no studies that have compared the attitudes of First Year medical students with feeder stream students (students who join the mainstream medical course following a degree scheme) towards the importance of understanding classical Greek and Latin during their medical training. To assess these attitudes, the study involved both these cohorts into a medical course at Cardiff University.

Following ethical approval from the School Research Ethical committee, these students were provided with a brief questionnaire that was designed in accordance with the principles of Thurstone and Chave (1951). 28 feeder stream students participated (100%) in the survey (Medical Pharmacology n=16, Medical Science n=14). One hundred and eighty First Year students (60%) responded. The initial hypothesis was that being taught in the same environment, both these cohorts will have a positive attitude towards the importance of classical Greek and Latin. Contrary to the hypothesis, the First Year students had a positive attitude while feeder stream students had a negative attitude.

As these feeder stream students belong to Second Year of their studies, they have either dissected animals or have attended anatomy station based practicals during their initial years, it could be suggested that they became well-versed with anatomical and medical terminologies. It was concluded that these feeder stream students are likely to have become accomplished in the origins of medical terminologies without formal instruction.

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