Studies on Entrance Examination of National Universities in Japan and Direction of Its Improvement

No body would deny an extremely important role of entrance examination in medical school to obtain students with adequate preadmission quality to become a nuclear person among health man power. However, the present situation in Japan is very serious, because the entrance examination has been mostly concentrated into written tests only. As the result the entrance examination deformed normal education in and below high schools.

This paper will briefly describe a short history of its improvement, analyse and identify the present problems, and finally indicate a direction for its improvement.

Studies on and improvement of the entrance examination have been undertaken by three different ways in national universities as shown in the following.

1. The Council to Improve Entrance Examination in the Ministry of Education ((Nyushi-Kaizen-Kaigi): The Council has made efforts by defining or suggesting better methods every year step by step for about 10 years, however, it was not so influential to correct the deformed interrelationship between the entrance examination and high school education.

2. The Research Committees of Entrance Examination in many national universities or colleges (Nyugakusha-Senbatsu-hōhō-Kenkyū-Inkai): Main and Important results which were clarified by the Committees were; 1) High school records apparently correlated to the university records, but there is no significant correlationship between the results of entrance examination and the university records. 2) The so-called high school difference really exists when judged with the results of entrance examinations, however, the difference is extremely small or almost disappears when judged with records of university after admission. 3) There are many committee’s views that combination of the high school records and entrance examination is much better to anticipate or select excellent students than using written tests only.

3. The special Investigation Committee to Improve Entrance Examination in the Association of National Universities (Kokudaikyō-Nyūshi-Kaizen-Chōsa-Inkai): The Committee is planning a new system of common primary entrance examination among national universities and the pilot test has been done already by using multiple choice questions and computer. The results proved that well made multiple choice questions could fully evaluate fundamental levels achieved by high school graduates. This is something like MCAT (Medical College Admission Test) in the USA or GCE (General Certificate of Education) in England. The results of the examination can be used with or without high school records to select candidates primarily, and also be utilized to final selection with combination of high school records and the secondary examination committed to each university. There remain many problems to be solved, so that the committee is continuing the study very carefully.

There is anxious opinions that to add high school records to the results of entrance written examination is not good, because the passing order will be changed. It is a quite nonsense consideration, because the reason why to combinated high school records is to change the passing order and to get students who have better high school records and good reputation by high school teachers. That those students will mark higher in universities than those who have skill trained to pass only entrance examination has been already proved statistically by above mentioned studies.

Finally the present author would like to show a direction to improve entrance examination in medical schools as below:
1) University administrators and teachers must change their conception about entrance examination by understanding the results of studies on entrance examination.
2) Entrance examination is one of evaluation, so that multifactors (high school records, common primary tests, health records, interview etc.) must be combined to increase its validity and reliability.
3) Interview by cooperation of psychologist many be helpful to get students who have better aptitude to become medical doctors.
4) Changing entrance examination must be always directed to pull back the present situation of deformed education in and below high schools into its ideal status.

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