

## Introduction

The Johns Hopkins Medical School was the first institute to implement a graduate entry medical program in the 19th century. In the late 1990s, schools in Australia started implementing a similar model.<sup>1</sup> This model requires students to complete a baccalaureate degree first before beginning medical schools. Many arguments have been made for this change, with one being the idea of maturity. The belief idea being that entering medical school at an older age would allow students to be more confident of their career choice (calling-to-medicine, CTM) and assist allow them to cope with the challenges and intensity rigor of medical school (coping self-efficacy, CSE). In this study, we aim to explore the impact of age on these measures.

## Methods

A quantitative cross-sectional study was used. Data was collected from first-year medical students via a survey to collect demographic information and measures of CTM and CSE. The data was split across three age groups (20-25, 26-30, 31+) and multivariate analysis was performed to compare each group.

### Calling

It refers to the idea that one has of a transcendent summons to a career that serves others. This was measured using the Brief Calling Scale.<sup>3</sup>

### Coping Self-Efficacy

It refers to a person's confidence in adapting to and dealing with potential stressors and challenges. This was measured using the Coping Self-Efficacy Scale.<sup>2</sup>

**Table 1. Comparison of Traits by Student Group**

Trait	Student Age Group	n	Mean +/- SD	95% CI for Mean	P value
Calling	20-25	330	7.22 +/- 1.99	7.01-7.44	0.862
	26-30	74	7.31 +/- 1.92	6.87-7.76	
	31+	21	7.43 +/- 2.01	6.51-8.35	
	Total	425			
Coping Self-Efficacy	20-25	330	10.06 +/- 2.29	9.82-10.31	0.288
	26-30	74	10.49 +/- 2.45	9.92-11.05	
	31+	21	10.48 +/- 1.57	9.76-11.19	
	Total	425			

## Results

425 students responded to the questionnaire survey (330 in the 20-25 group, 74 in the 26-30 group, 21 in the 31+ group). There was no difference found in CSE and CTM between the three groups.

## Discussion

These findings suggest that age does not influence levels of CSE and CTM, suggesting a maturity argument might not be ideal in justifying a shift from undergraduate to postgraduate entry programs. More studies need to be conducted to understand how age may help or hinder students' confidence to cope with medical school and whether it has an influence on the strength of calling to medicine as a career.

## References

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3. Dik BJ, DuBois RD. Calling and vocation at work: definitions and prospects for research and practice. Couns Psychol. 2009;37(3):424-450. doi:10.1177/001100000831643