

Attitudes towards Science and Alternative Medicine of Medical, Economics and Business, and Electrical Engineering Students in Split, Croatia

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Aim. To assess attitudes of students at the Split University Schools of Medicine, Economics and Business, and Electrical Engineering towards science and alternative medicine.

Methods. There were 275 respondents surveyed for their opinion on science and different aspects of alternative medicine. The respondents were grouped into three major groups: medical students (83 or 30%), economics and business students (95 or 35%), and electrical engineering students (97 or 35%). Each group was composed of two subgroups: first and final year students. We used a specially designed questionnaire composed of four parts to collect students' demographic data and investigate their scientific experience and attitudes towards science and alternative medicine. ANOVA was used to test the differences among the three major groups of students and between first and final year students within each group.

Results. There was no significant difference among the first year students at three different schools in their scores on attitude towards science (ANOVA; $F=0.001$, $p=0.99$) and the attitude towards alternative medicine ($F=2.61$, $p=0.08$). However, there was a significant difference among the final year students at the three schools, with medical students being the most positive in their score on the attitude towards science ($F=7.30$, $p=0.001$) and least positive in their score on the attitude towards alternative medicine ($F=30.7$, $p<0.001$). There was a negative correlation between attitudes towards science and alternative medicine ($r=-0.37$, $p<0.001$) for all schools.

Conclusion. Medical students showed the most positive attitude towards science and least positive attitude towards alternative medicine, compared with the students of economics and business or electrical engineering. The curriculum of the Medical School, unlike the curricula of other two schools, could have an impact on students' attitudes towards science.

Key words: attitude; complementary therapies; Croatia; science; students; students, medical