Determinants of road courtesy in Malta: a prerogative of gender, age and car size

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Introduction: Courtesy on busy Maltese roads is not always evident but it is dependent on or influenced by, for example, driver and car characteristics?

Methods: Courtesy was defined when a driver with the right of way ‘allowed access’ to another, ‘secondary’ car onto a main road leading to a congested roundabout, whereby ‘courteous passage’ was the only reasonable means of access. The same car (class2, 17.5yrs in poor condition), with one driver (SAM, 50+) and passenger (EAM, 17yrs), approaching the same junction at 0730hrs±15min on school days was used as the secondary car.

Results: Records from 88 schooldays over 6 months resulted in 141 refusals plus 44 courteous passes (analysed), and 46 vehicles (Gp7-11, p=0.009), especially in those with male drivers compared with small cars (Gp1-3, p=0.04), and luxury or work bearing on road courtesy, if analysed independently. Courtesy (not analysed). Gender, age, weather and passengers had no influence.

Conclusion: Adoption of these guidelines will allow widespread implementation of up to date and evidence based oncoLOGY protocols, assist in the provision of consistently and streamline management of patients. They are however not intended as a substitute for specialist oncology input but to disseminate a framework for homogenous and evidence based clinical practice for the clinicians concerned.

How much anatomy do medical students remember?

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Introduction: Pure anatomy teaching at the University of Malta is completed by the second year, and is not formally revisited later. This study aimed to determine the extent of anatomical knowledge retention in each year of medical school.

Methods: Participating students, recruited from the first to the final year of medical school, submitted voluntarily to a best-of-four multiple-choice test, consisting of 99 clinical and non-clinical anatomy questions spanning all principal body regions, under examination conditions.

Results: 239 students enrolled in the study. Overall, second year students scored lowest (56.6%), with progressive improvement noted with clinical exposure in the third (63.0%) and fourth (64.2%) years; p=0.0264. Knowledge of thoracic anatomy improved in the clinical years (p < 0.0001), limb anatomy improved in the clinical years following an initial decline after first year (upper: p = 0.0166; lower: p = 0.0022), gastrointestinal (p = 0.1155) and neuroanatomical (p = 0.5818) knowledge levels were largely unchanged, whilst knowledge of renal and reproductive anatomy declined between first and second year students, before plateauing (p = 0.0110).

Conclusion: Our results largely support the traditional teaching method currently employed. This whilst raising questions on the clinical relevance of content taught in various body regions, and supporting the relevance of an all-encompassing final anatomical exam at the end of the preclinical years.