How Do Lifestyle Characteristics Influence Medical Specialty Choice

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May 1st, 2015

11th Annual AAMC Health Workforce Research Conference

Alexandria, Virginia

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Center for Health Workforce Studies

- Based at the School of Public Health at the University at Albany, SUNY

- Not-for-profit academic research center

- Mission: To provide timely, accurate data and conduct policy-relevant research about the health workforce

- Goal: To inform public policies, the health and education sectors, and the public

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The New York Resident Exit Survey

- A survey of all residents and fellows completing training in New York (approximately 5,000 annually)

- Conducted annually since 1998 (except for 2004 and 2006)

- Substantial support and assistance from GME directors and programs directors

- Average annual response rate of 61%

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Data and Methods

- Analysis restricted to 2014 respondents who had searched for a job (excluding IMGs on temporary Visas)

- N = 1,243

- First part of analysis explores how the importance of certain job characteristics varies by demographics

- Second part of analysis focuses on how these factors affect specialty choice using both bivariate tables and a multinomial regression model

Importance of Job Characteristics

	Not at all Important	Of little importance	Important	Very Important
Predictable start and end time each workday	1.9%	13.4%	48.4%	36.4%
Length of each workday	1.5%	10.3%	53.8%	34.4%
Frequency of overnight calls	2.7%	7.4%	41.0%	48.9%
Frequency of weekend duties	1.5%	7.1%	43.7%	47.7%

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"Very Important" Job Characteristics Varied by Gender and Race/Ethnicity

	Female	Male	URMs	Non-URMs
Predictable start and end time each workday	42.7%*	30.3%	47.8%*	34.5%
Length of each workday	40.5%*	28.4%	43.4%*	32.8%
Frequency of overnight calls	54.0%*	44.0%	61.1%*	46.7%
Frequency of weekend duties	52.4%*	43.2%	59.3%*	45.7%

* p < .05 for t-test

Underrepresented Minorities (URMs) include Blacks/African Americans, Hispanic/Latinos, and American Indians/Alaska Natives

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"Very Important" Job Characteristics Did Not Differ by Relationship Status or Dependent Children

	Married/ Long-term Relationship	Single/ Divorced	Dependent Children	No Dependent Children
Predictable start and end time each workday	36.9%	35.3%	40.1%	34.2%
Length of each workday	34.0%	35.3%	36.9%	32.8%
Frequency of overnight calls	48.3%	50.4%	49.3%	48.7%
Frequency of weekend duties	47.4%	48.7%	49.7%	46.5%

p < .05 for t-test

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Do Job Characteristics Influence Medical Specialty Choice?

	Predictable start and end time each workday	**Length of each workday**	**Frequency of overnight calls**	**Frequency of weekend duties**
Primary Care (n=405)	39.0%	35.8%	51.1%	46.2%
Ob/Gyn (n=68)	20.6%*	16.2%*	30.9%*	35.3%*
Medicine Subspecialties (n=182)	39.6%	36.8%	52.2%	54.9%*
Surgical Specs (n=100)	25.0%*	21.0%*	34.0%*	34.0%*
Facility Based (n=164)	34.1%	33.5%	48.2%	50.6%
Psychiatry (n=89)	50.6%*	52.8%*	76.4%*	76.4%*
Other (n=235)	35.3%	34.5%	44.3%	41.3%*

* p < .05 for t-test (eg, primary care compared to non-primary care specialties)

Facility Based Specialties include Anesthesiology, Radiology, and Pathology

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Do Personal Characteristics Influence Specialty Choice?

	Married/Long-term Relationship	Dependent Children
Primary Care (n=364)	71.6%	34.3%
Ob/Gyn (n=64)	76.5%	29.4%
Medicine Subspecialties (n=165)	80.2%*	55.5%*
Surgical Specs (n=88)	79.0%	38.0%
Facility Based (n=151)	73.2%	32.9%
Psychiatry (n=76)	70.8%	38.2%
Other (n=198)	66.4%*	36.2%

* $p < .05$ for t-test (eg, primary care compared to non-primary care specialties)

Facility Based Specialties include Anesthesiology, Radiology, and Pathology

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Medical Specialty Multinomial Logistic Regression Model (Reference Category: Primary Care)

Variable	Ob/Gyn Exp(B)	Surgical Specs Exp(B)	Psychiatry Exp(B)
Female	9.764*	0.233*	0.939
URM	0.392	0.419*	0.749
IMG	0.520*	0.070*	0.305*
Education Debt	1.005*	1.002	1.000
Predictable Day	0.790	1.009	0.651
Length of Day	0.404	0.655	1.294
Overnight Calls	0.326*	0.507	1.258
Weekend Duties	2.397	1.611	3.520*
Married/Long Rel.	1.211	1.416	0.900
Dependent Child.	1.373	1.693	1.552

$p < .05$

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Conclusion

- Females and URMs placed more importance on some job characteristics than others

- The importance of job characteristics that lead to a more manageable lifestyle did not vary much by relationship status and having dependent children

- While job characteristics that favor a more manageable lifestyle appear to vary with some specialties these variations largely disappear in a multivariate analysis

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