

Perception and Attitudes of Medical Students towards Dermatology as a Future Specialty.

Authors : Rakan Alajmi, Rahaf Alnazzawi, Yara Aljefri, Abdullah Alafif, Ali Alraddadi, Awadh Alamri

Abstract : Background: The distribution of physicians in different specialties across Saudi Arabia is determined by the career choices of medical students. Dermatology residency program is one of the highly competitive programs here in Saudi Arabia. Assessing and understanding the factors perceived to be attractive in choosing dermatology will aid the directors of the specialty programs to plan for a more balanced workforce distribution to better suit the needs of the specialties. Aim: The aim of our study is to determine and assess the factors perceived to be significantly attractive when choosing dermatology as a future specialty. Methods: The study is a cross-sectional study conducted in King Saud bin Abdulaziz University for Health Sciences, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. A validated questionnaire was sent electronically to clinical year medical students. In addition to the questionnaire, gender, grade point average, preferred specialty, and other socio-demographic data were assessed. Results: A total of 121 clinical years medical students completed the questionnaire, 8 (6.6%) preferred dermatology as a specialty. 76 (62.8%) of the participants score a grade point average of more than 4.5 and 83 students (68.6%) chose their specialty during clinical years. The appeal of being a dermatologist ($P=0.047$), the portrayal of different specialties in the media ($P=0.005$), and the likelihood that dermatologists can influence patients' lives ($P=0.010$) were shown to be significantly attractive factors. Conclusion: There are many factors that are affecting students' choices when choosing a medical specialty. The appeal of being a dermatologist, the portrayal of different specialties in the media, and the likelihood that dermatologists can influence patients' lives were shown to be significantly attractive factors when choosing dermatology as a future specialty. Recognizing medical students' specialty perception will lead them to a proper specialty tailored to their needs.

Keywords : dermatology, career choice, medical specialties, student's perception

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