



Pre-Matriculation Experiences Minimally Impact the Specialty Interests of First-Year Medical Students

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Background

- There are many factors that influence medical students' ultimate decision of which specialty to pursue
- Factors include prior exposure to the specialty, salary, specialty culture, type of medicine, lifestyle and more (Figure 1)
- Student demographics may also impact specialty decisions
- Understanding how these factors impact specialty choice can help educators design medical school curricula and career exploration opportunities
- Previous studies have focused on factors determining a career choice in surgery
- Little work has focused on students' desires to match into competitive specialties

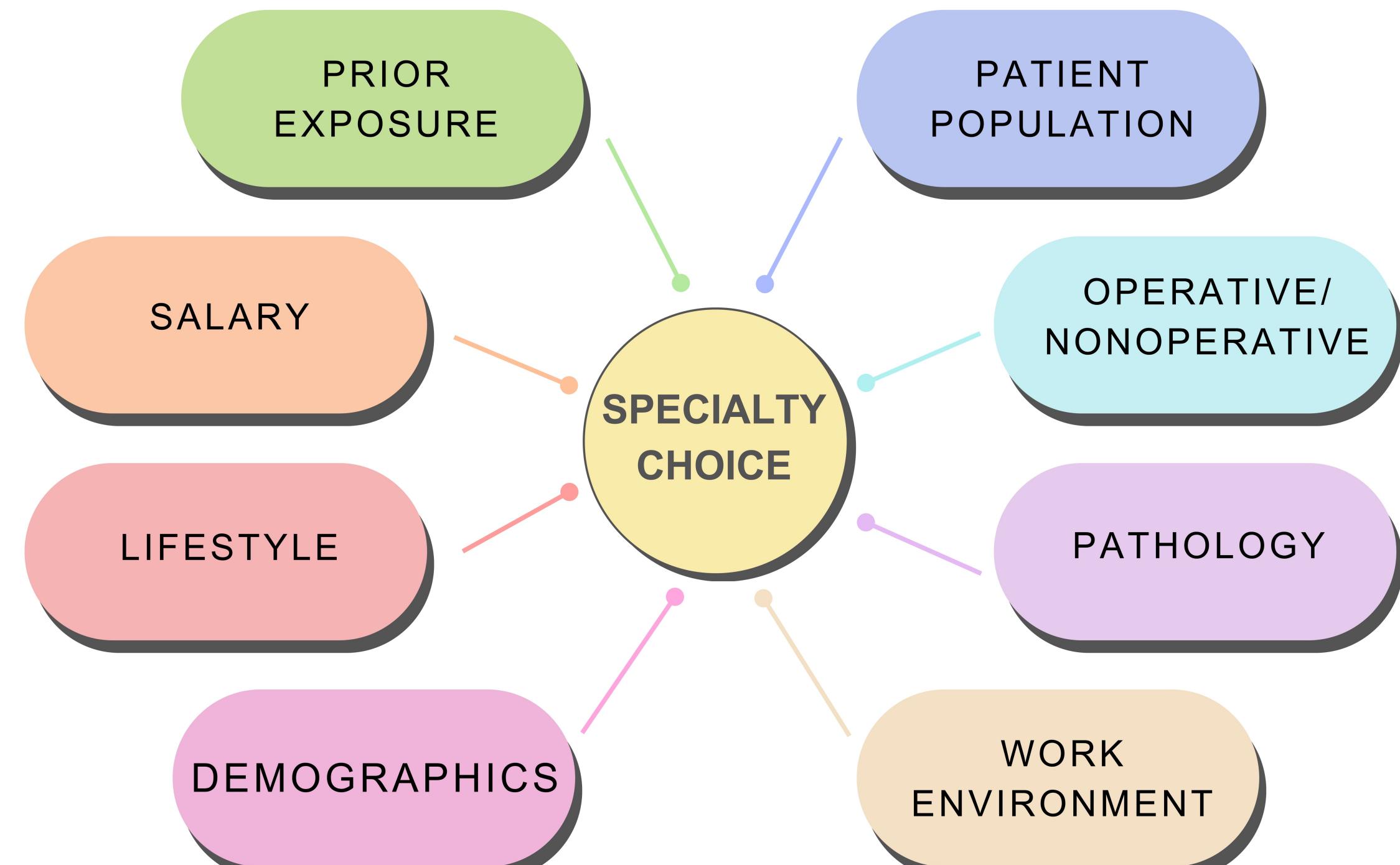


Figure 1. Factors influencing medical students' eventual specialty choice.

Objective: The objective of this study was to identify factors associated with students' interest in competitive specialties.

Hypothesis: We hypothesized that students with more clinical and research experience upon entry to medical school would have greater interest in competitive specialties.

Methods

Survey administered via RedCap to first-year medical students upon matriculation.

Survey was divided into: Demographic Information, Pre-Matriculation Experiences, and Specialty Interests



Scan to view RedCap Survey.

We defined competitive specialties defined as having a match rate <90% as per the National Resident Matching Program.

Responses analyzed in R using univariate and multivariate logistic regression, $p < 0.05$.

Results

159 of 200 first-year medical students (80%) completed the survey

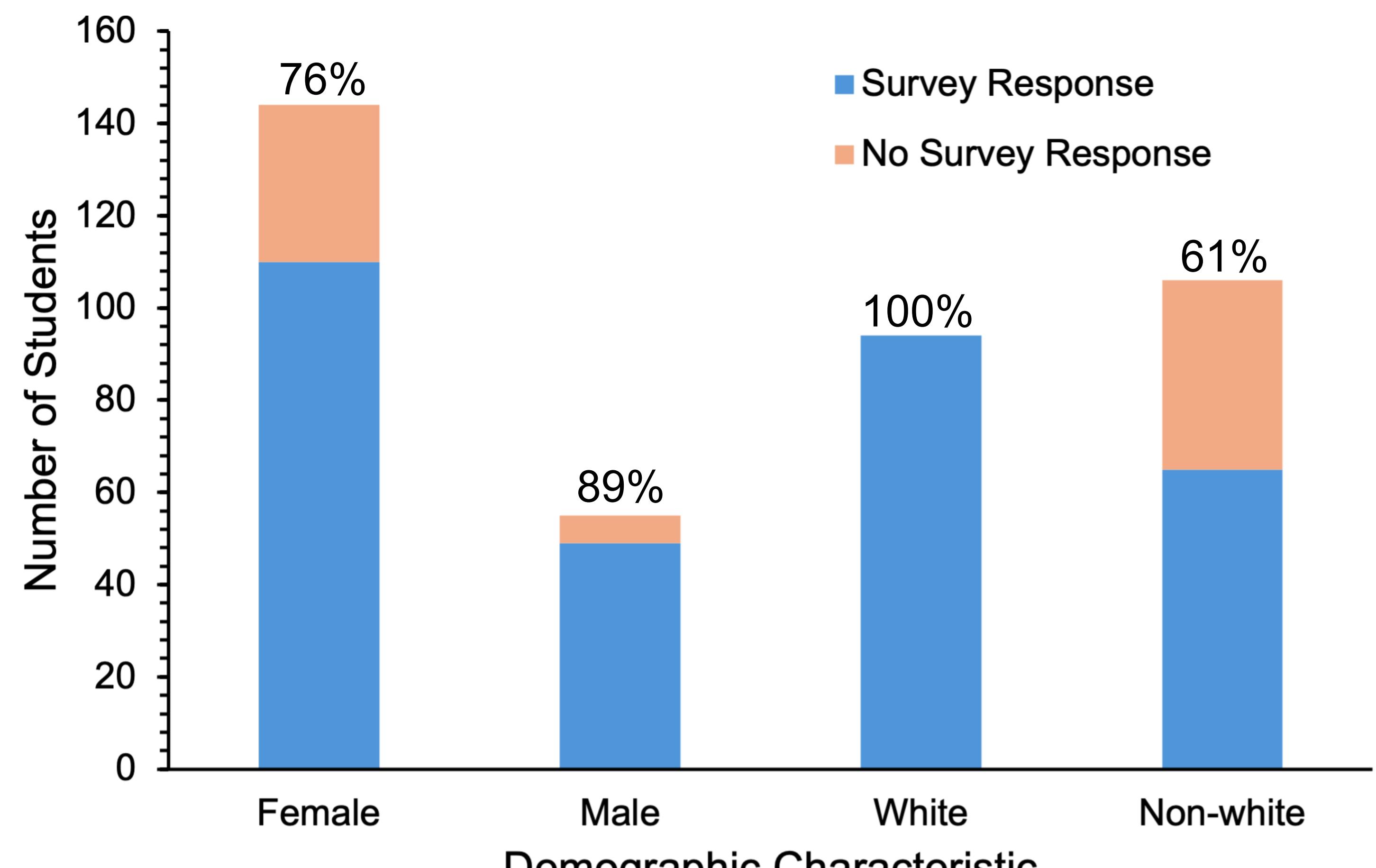


Figure 2. Number of Survey Respondents Compared to Overall Class Value. The median age of survey respondents was 24 years old. Race was self-reported using the multiple-choice options from the US census. Percent indicates the proportion of survey respondents compared to the overall class for that characteristic.

Results (cont.)

49% reported their top choice as a competitive specialty

- Male students had less interest in competitive specialties
- Students with >50 hours of clinical or research experience in their top specialty were not more likely to be interested in a competitive one
- Parent in medicine and cumulative debt > \$200k are trending towards higher OR, though not statistically significant

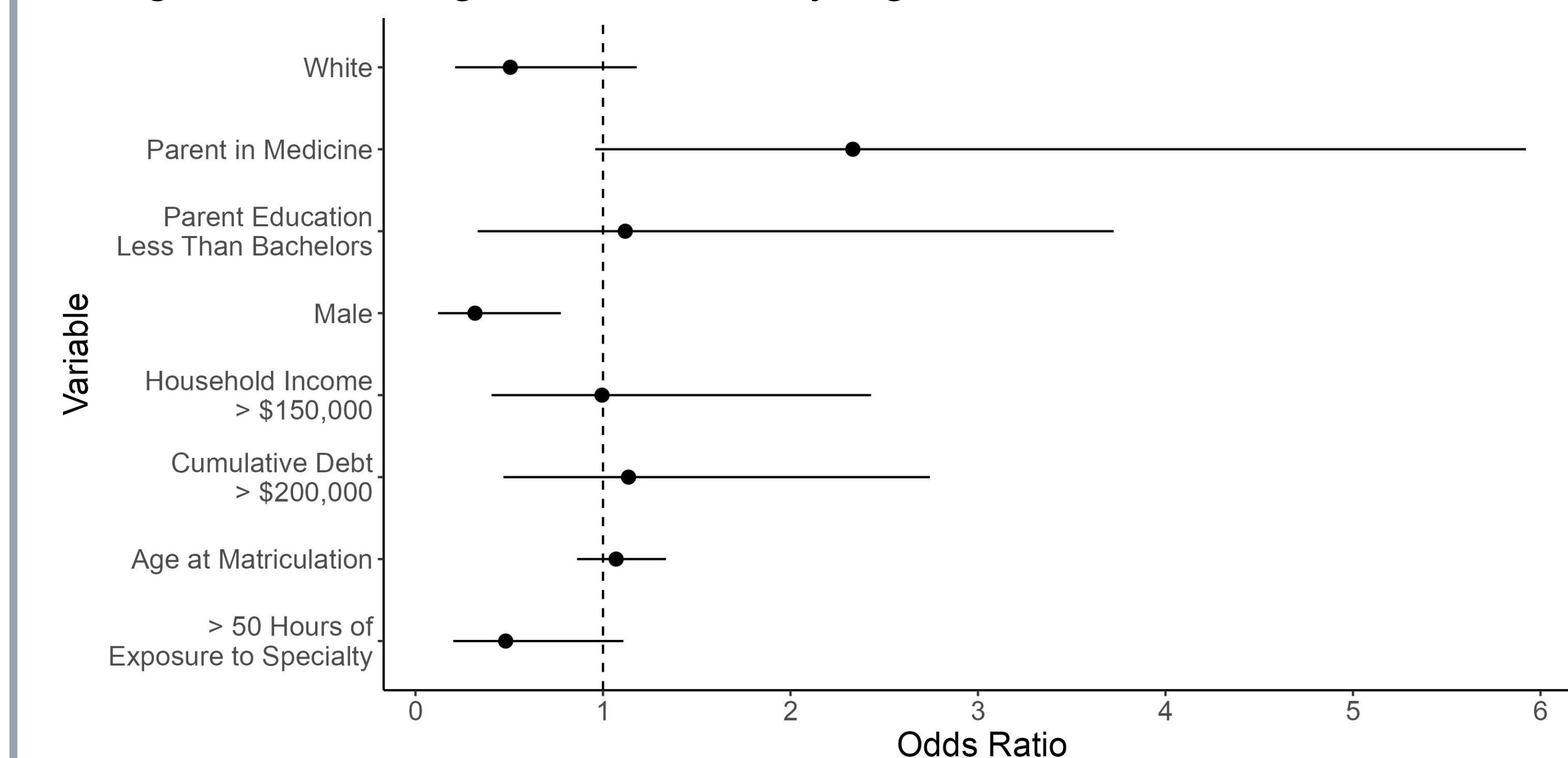


Figure 3. Multivariate Logistic Regression Predicting Interest In A Competitive Specialty. Odds ratios and their corresponding 95% confidence intervals are shown for a multivariate regression model.

Discussion

- Few factors captured by the survey predicted interest in competitive versus non-competitive specialties
- Minimal impact of pre-matriculation experiences indicates that specialty interest primarily develops during medical school
- Research into how interest changes during medical school may help guide the structure of medical education and career exploration opportunities during undergraduate medical training

Future Work

Administer survey at end of M1, start of M2, and end of M2

Track changes in specialty interest and associated factors

Use data to inform medical school curricular changes

Acknowledgements

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