

Research Update



Graduating pediatric residents report factors influencing subspecialty choice

from [AAP Research](#)

Job opportunities and interest in specific diseases or systems are the top factors that influence subspecialty choice among graduating pediatric residents who pursue fellowship training, new AAP data show. Future income is less of a priority.

Thirty-eight percent of 2019 graduates reported starting a pediatric fellowship following residency, including 41% of men and 37% of women, according to the AAP Annual Survey of Graduating Residents. The majority of residents were starting fellowships in one of five specialties: neonatology, hematology/oncology, cardiology, emergency medicine or critical care.

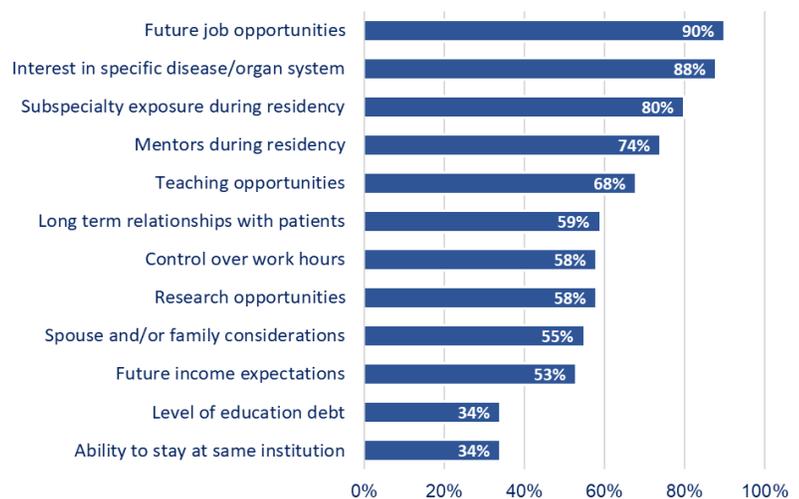
Among factors of importance in their subspecialty choice, nine in 10 residents reported that future job opportunities and interest in specific diseases or systems were essential or very important (see figure). Experiences during residency, such as subspecialty exposure and mentors, were essential or very important in decisions for most residents. Financial considerations were less important, but half reported future income expectations and one-third rated their level of educational debt as essential or very important.

RESOURCES

- The AAP Mentorship Program provides a way for trainees to search for members in a particular subspecialty and opportunities for mentors and mentees. For information, visit <http://aapmentorship.chronus.com> or contact Britt Nagy at 630-626-6064 or bnagy@aap.org.
- For more information on the Annual Survey of Graduating Residents, visit www.aap.org/grs or contact Mary Pat Frintner at 630-626-6664 or mfrintner@aap.org.

Factors important to residents in choosing which pediatric subspecialty to pursue

Percent reporting the element is essential or very important



Source: AAP Annual Survey of Graduating Residents, 2019 (n=188, who are pursuing fellowship training)

Factors prioritized in subspecialty choice were similar for men and women. Residents with children were more likely than those without children to report spouse and family considerations (86% vs. 48%) and control over work hours (80% vs. 53%) as essential or very important.

“While some subspecialties continue to grow, others struggle to fill their spots,” said Harold K. Simon, M.D., M.B.A., FAAP, chair of the AAP Committee on Pediatric Workforce. “This data can help inform discussions decision-makers are having on increasing recruitment of trainees in all pediatric subspecialties, especially those that may be less commonly chosen but critical for serving future workforce needs.”

The Annual Survey of Graduating Residents is sent to a nationally representative random sample of 1,000 residents graduating from U.S. pediatric programs. Surveys are mailed and emailed each year from May to August. The response rate for the 2019 survey was 51%.