

Future Dreams of Junior and Senior Medical Students at A Public Saudi Medical School

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Background: Medical education is a challenging profession requiring students to acquire various skills and develop them continuously before and after graduation. The study aimed to assess the students' preference toward specialty and determine their preferred residency program and future ambitions regarding administrative and leadership positions.

Methodology: This is a cross-sectional self-administered survey that included medical students in 1st year, and 5th year and internship at Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University (IMSIU). The questionnaire consisted of demographic information and questions about the student's choices regarding plans.

Results: Four hundred and fifty-eight (458) medical students out of 583 students (55.5% junior and 44.5% senior students) enrolled themselves in the study and completed the survey. Findings revealed that medical students' top five preferred future general medical specialties were surgery (34.5), followed by internal medicine (18.3), family medicine (17.2), dermatology (14.6), and emergency medicine (15.9). The junior students were found to be more inclined toward dermatology, medical genetics, and surgical general specialties. The findings showed that 63% of the students were interested in becoming future leaders, with 52.8% of them wishing to become head of a medical department. When asked about their desired qualifications, 85.8% preferred the Saudi Board.

Conclusion: Surgery was the most favorable specialty among medical students, followed by internal medicine, family medicine and dermatology, and emergency medicine. The study showed a significant difference between males and females and seniors and juniors in preference of specialty and medical qualification, the female medical students prefer to specialize in dermatology ($p=0.027$), neurology ($p=0.028$), and obstetrics and gynecology ($p=0.001$) as a general specialty significantly more than male medical students. It shows that students are interested in future leadership goals.