



# Research Week 2021

## Male Parent vs Female Parent Specialty Choice

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### Keywords

Specialty choice, parenthood, gender differences

### Background:

Medical training occurs during childbearing years for many students. Though being a parent is demanding for males and females, the effect of parental status and parental gender on specialty choice has not been well established.

### Objective:

To assess the role of parenthood and parental gender on specialty selection.

### Methods:

We conducted a multicenter study of medical students enrolled in Oregon Health and Science University, Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth, and University of Michigan using an anonymous web-based survey. Invitations were sent to all medical students at each institution in April 2020 with a reminder in May 2020. Participating students received a 22 question survey covering specialty choice, perception of specialties, parenthood status, and factors influencing specialty choice. Survey was distributed using Qualtrics (Qualtrics, Provo, UT). Statistical analyses included descriptive, Chi-Square, and paired t-tests.

### Results

A total of 537 out of 2236 (24.0%) students responded. The majority (359, 66.8%) were female and aged 24-35 (430, 80.1%). Of respondents, 59 (10.9%) were parents or expecting. Of student parents, 30 (50.8%) were female, 28 (47.5%) were male, and 1 was non-binary. The top two specialties chosen by female parents were OB/GYN (10, 33.3%) and Internal Medicine (4, 13.3%). Male parents selected Emergency Medicine (8, 28.6%) and Internal Medicine (5, 17.9%) ( $p=0.0085$ ). Passion for the field, culture of the specialty, and quality of life were the top three influencing factors for both groups. There was no statistically significant difference between how much parenthood influenced specialty choice.

### Conclusion:

Male and female parents cited the same factors influencing their career choices. Female parents choose specialties that they are passionate about and are not more influenced by parental status and should be supported in what they choose to pursue.