

Speciality Preference Among Under Graduates, A Study Done In Tertiary Care Centres In North India

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Abstract

BACKGROUND: During and after graduation, the most confusing and difficult question in mind of medicos is selection of ideal medical speciality.

AIM/PURPOSE OF THE STUDY: To study the various factors are involved in one's life which led to motivation and reason to choose one specific speciality.

MATERIAL AND METHODS: This is a study conducted in two medical colleges in Jammu city that are Government Medical college, Jammu and ASCOMS.

RESULTS: A sample of 400 students was taken in the survey out of which 85 students did not responded to the questionnaire. A total of 176 males and 139 females were present in the study. In general, Medicine was the most preferred of the specialities followed by surgery. Most of the students did not receive any advice for choosing their speciality. Most of the students did not have any medical background. Students interest in the particular diseases led them to choose a speciality most of the time. Gender based trend show males have more predilection towards orthopaedics while females towards obstetrics and gynaecology.

CONCLUSION: The present study reveals that the most preferred specialities among medical students were Medicine followed by surgery.

KEY WORDS: Preference, Specialty, Graduates.

INTRODUCTION

Choosing a medical speciality can be either an intimidating or perplexing experience for some medical students, junior doctors or a foregone conclusion to others. Post graduates medical education is increasing being acknowledged as a necessity for the practice of different specialities in India. The importance of post graduation studies is widely accepted among doctors. With the increasing use of internet among general masses, the awareness has increased for consulting a specialist for a particular pathology.

Various factors are involved in one's life which led to motivation and reason to choose one specific speciality. It can be advice from family, Friends or own interest in a particular speciality ^(1,2,3,4,5). While a motivation does vary

according to specialities, they may include lifestyle choices, possibility of private practice, interest in disease, varied scope of practice, interest in research and teaching or to gain higher income ^(6,7,8).

In our country "INDIA", at present a total of 42,182 clinical and non clinical post graduation seats are available which are filled by a due process i.e. National eligibility entrance test and institute of national combined entrance test. Post graduation exam are getting extremely competitive every passing year. This may be partly due to increase in number of government and private medical colleges leading to disproportionate increase in under graduates seats as compared to postgraduate seats. It is a kind of bottle neck effect with more undergraduates and less of post graduates i.e. 91,927 in under graduation against 42,182 in post graduation.

In countries like United states, Canada, Japan, Saudi and Kuwait, the attitude of medical graduate or student or even aspirant towards higher education has been well documented .But in our country, leaving aside few assumptions which are purely based upon personal experiences and individual, no significant data is available, which will show the viewpoint of medical graduate /student towards post graduation. Hence, this study was undertaken in a tertiary centre to know about speciality preferences of MBBS students and determining the factors responsible for their choices.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This survey is based study was conducted in a tertiary care centres of Jammu city in 2022. 400 students participated in the study. Students were included from First year to Final year MBBS along with students doing internship and those who have completed their internship.

A self designed questionnaire was provided to the students in the physical form. Students were required to fill the form and return it back. Questionnaire contained different sets of questions regarding their personal life and professional life. Questionnaire stands as below:-

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR UNDER-GRADUATE STUDENTS TOWARDS PERPECTIVE TOWARDS POST GRADUTION STUDIES

1. Age
2. Gender
3. College
4. Father's Qualification and Profession
5. Mother's Qualification and Profession
6. Which subject you would like to take for Post Graduation
7. Why you consider taking this subject for Post Graduation
 - a) Interesting diseases
 - b) Patient care and Contact
 - c) Good income and quality life
 - d) Intellectual challenges
 - e) Early experience and Knowledge

- f) Status and Reputation
 - g) Prestige, Power and Influence
8. Which subject was of your interest in MBBS
9. Which Methodology of teaching suits you
- a) Black board
 - b) Power point slides
 - c) Animation
 - d) Any other

RESULTS

BASIC DEMOGRAPHICS-

A total of 400 questionnaires were distributed among the students of different classes. Out of the 400, only 315(78.75%) responded while 85(21.25%) did not returned the questionnaire (Table 1). 176(55.8%) were males while remaining 139(44.12%) were females (Table 2). 37(11.74%) students belonged to first year of MBBS, 40(12.69%) were in second year of MBBS, number of students in pre-final were 16(5.07%) and that of final year were 22(6.98%). Interns and Post-Interns were also included in the study with strength of 100 each i.e,31.74% each (Table 5).

SPECIALITY PREFERENCE- (Table 3)

The most preferred speciality among male student was orthopaedics followed by radiology and internal medicine where as in female students most preferred was obstetrics & gynaecology followed by ENT and surgery. It was very interesting to see that out of eight students who choose non clinical subjects as their first preference 87.5% of them were females.

A total of 84(26.6%) students choose medicine as their first preference out of which 53(63.3%) were males and 31(36.6%) were females. Only 19 students choose orthopaedics as their first choice out of which 13(68.42%) were males rest 6(31.57%) were females.

Obstetrics and gynaecology was the most preferred speciality among female students out of total 30(9.52%), 27(90%) were females while only 3(10%) were males. Males and females both at 61(50%) each were equally likely to express interest in general surgery.

It is interesting to see that almost all the students were able to express their choices barring only six (1.90%) were yet to decide what they want for them in future. It was also interesting to know that none of the student chooses anaesthesia as their specialty preference.

BACKGROUND (Table 4) AND SOURCE OF ADVICE (Table 7)

282(89.5%) students were not having any medical background. While only 10.47% i.e.33 students were having one or both the parents working in medical field. On the front of source of advice, most of the students 134(42.5%) did not seek any advice for their choices while 96(30.47%) were influenced by their families. Other sources of advice were friends (6%), other medical students (8%), residents (2.6%) and interns (10.43%).

FACTORS THAT INFLUENCED SPECIALITY PREFERENCE (Table 6)

Of the total, 21.7% of the respondents rated “INTERESTING DISEASES” of their speciality as the reason, 18.26% students rated “INTELLECTUAL CHALLENGES” influencing their preference. Other factors were “GOOD INCOME AND QUALITY OF LIFE” 17.39%, “PATIENT CARE AND CONTACT” 15.65%, “EARLY EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE” 10.43%, “POWER, PRESTIGE AND INFLUENCE” 8.69% AND STATUS AND REPUTATION 7.82%.

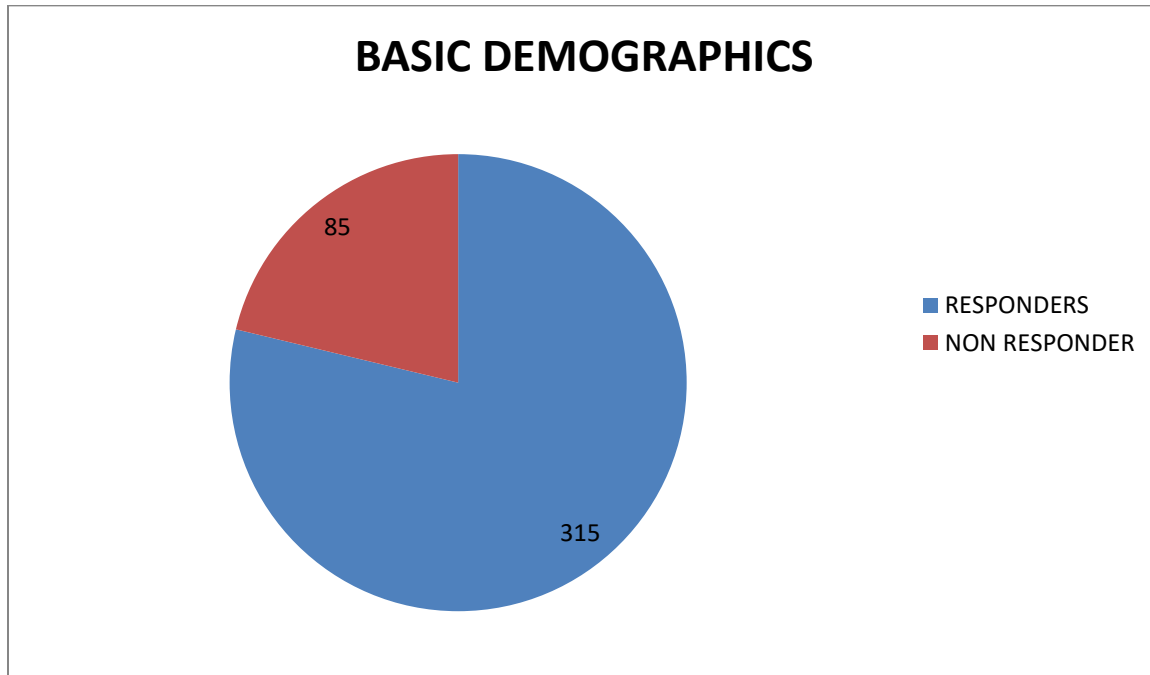


Table 1.

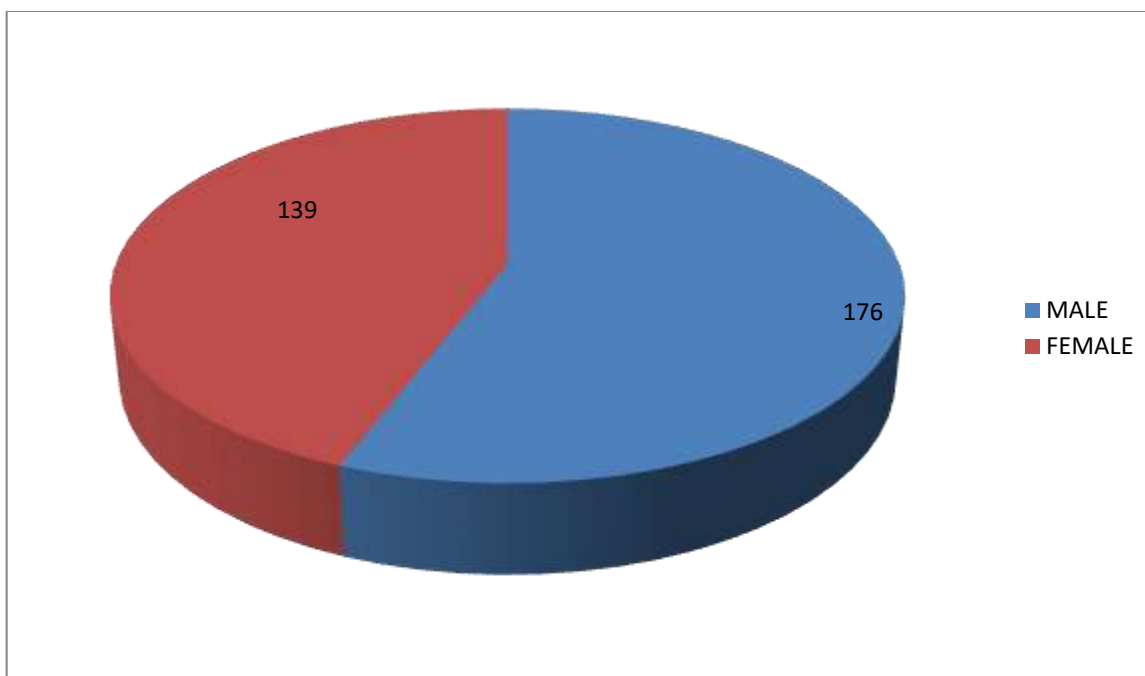


Table 2.

DISCIPLINE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE
MEDICINE	84(26.6%)	53(63.3%)	31(36.6%)
SURGERY	61(19.36%)	31(50.8%)	30(49.18%)
GYNAECOLOGY	30(9.52%)	3(10%)	27(90%)
RADIO	24(7.61%)	16(66.66%)	8(33.33%)
ENT	20(6.34%)	7(35%)	13(65%)
ORTHO	19(6.03%)	13(68.42%)	6(31.57%)
PEADS	16(5.07%)	11(68.75%)	5(31.25%)
OPHTH	13(4.12%)	8(61.53%)	5(38.4%)
DERMA	13(4.12%)	8(61.53%)	5(38.4%)
PSYCH	6(1.90%)	3(50%)	3(50%)
NON CLINICAL	23(7.30%)	3(13.04%)	20(86.95%)
NOT DECIDED	6(1.90%)	3(50%)	3(50%)

Table 3.

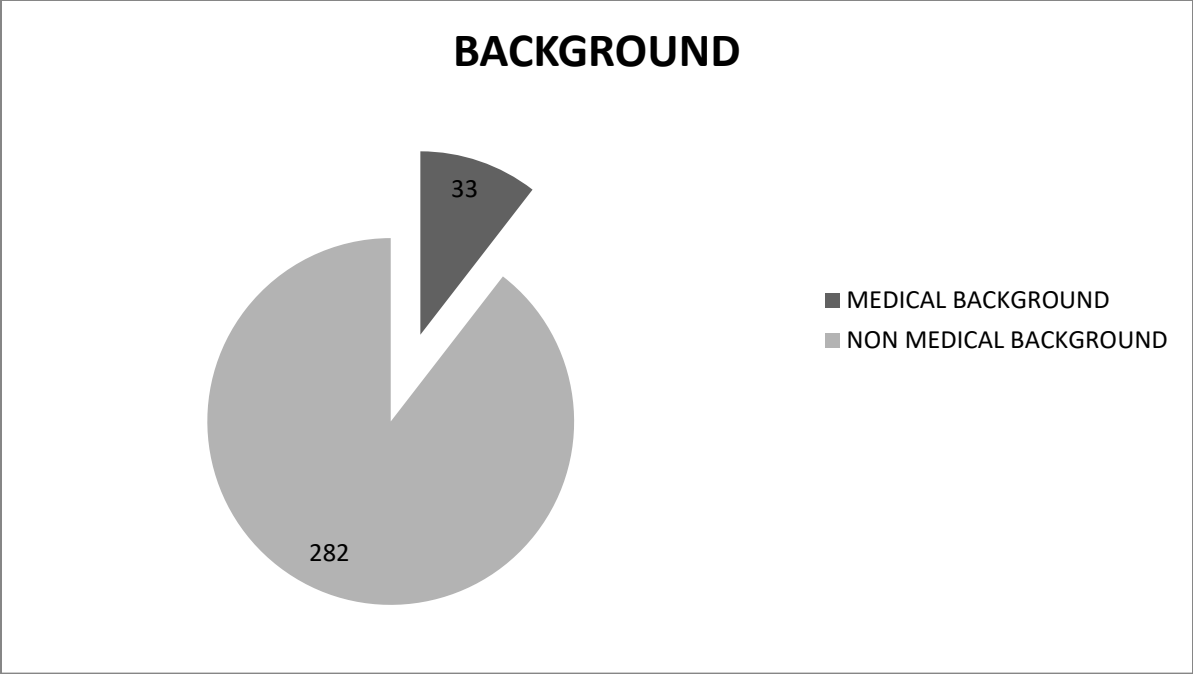


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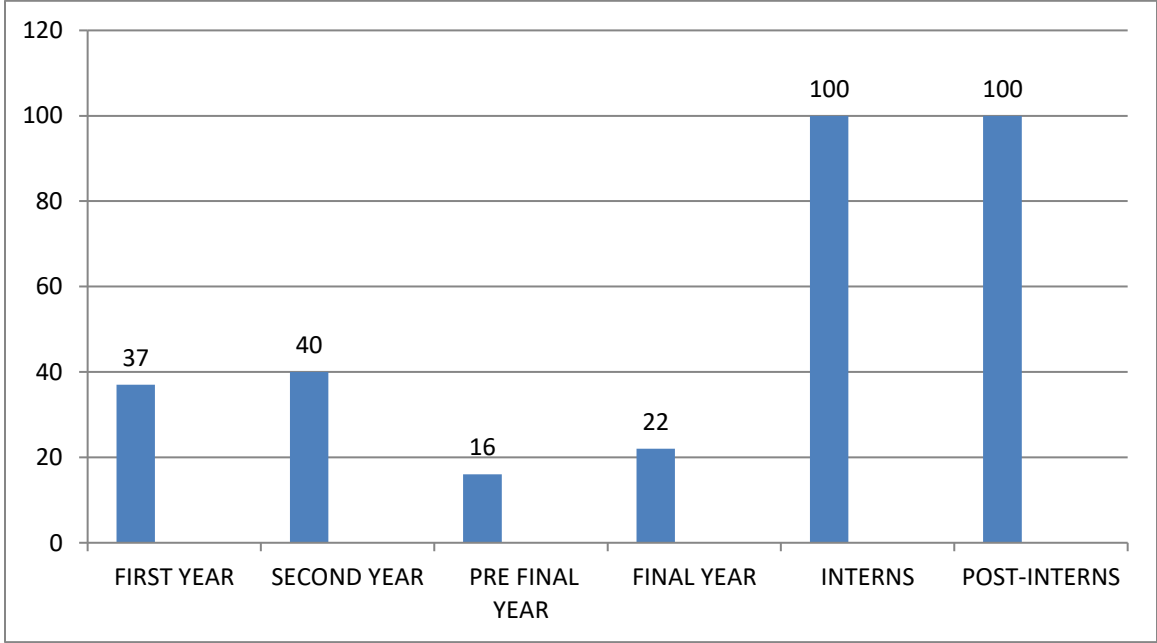


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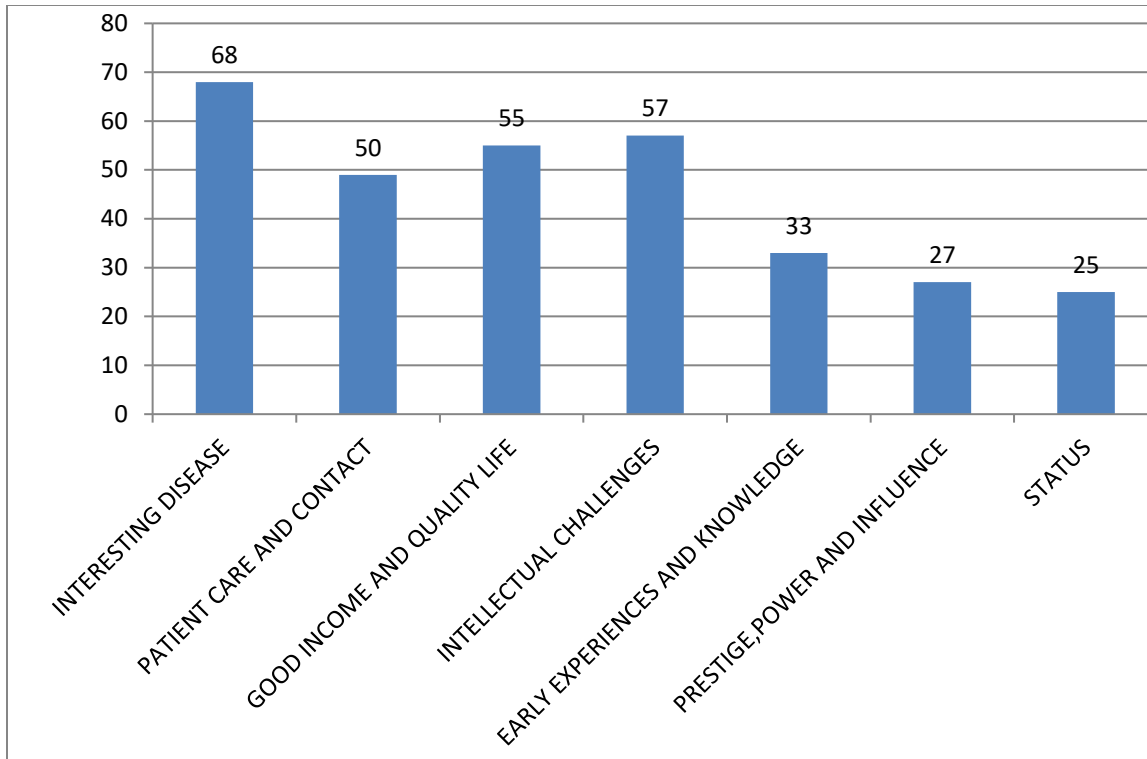


Table 6.

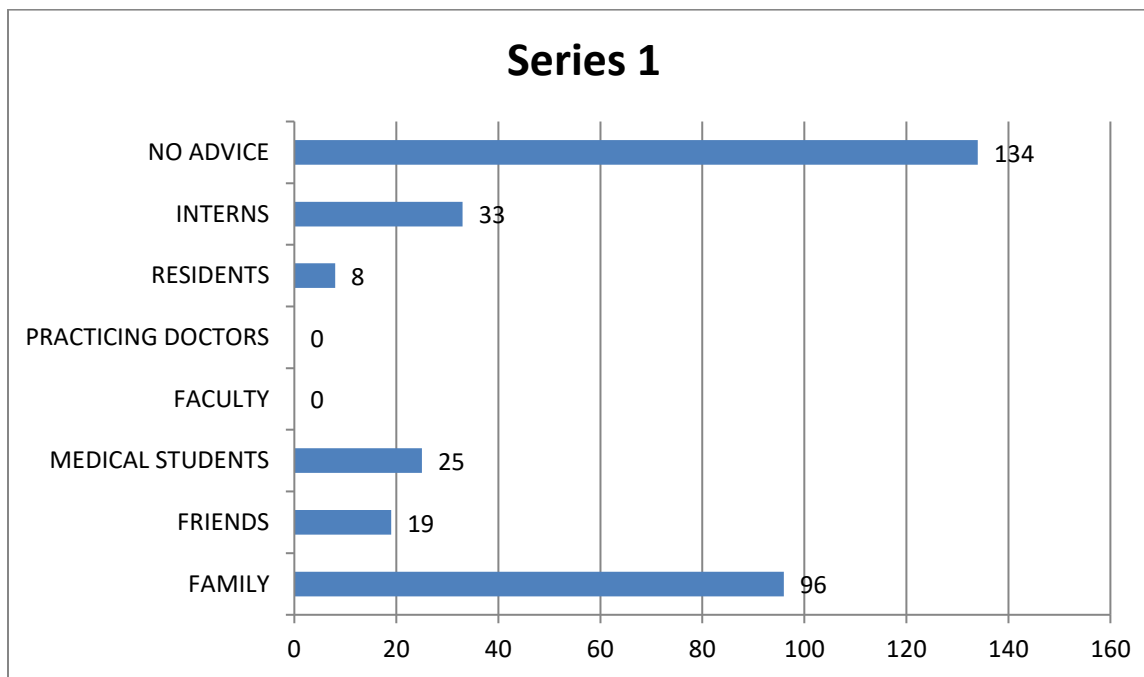


Table 7.

DISCUSSION

The speciality chosen by medical students and factors influencing these preferences are of the importance to the medical administrators/government, in order to keep the balance of providing facilities to the people of the state.

Internal medicine, surgery, obs & gynae, radio were the preferred specialities followed by ENT and orthopaedics in government medical college, JAMMU. These findings were similar to other studies ^(9,10).

Gender differences were noted, while more of the female were leaning towards obs & gynae, ENT and even non clinical. More of males were trending towards orthopaedics, medicine, radiology and paediatric (Table 8). These findings were different from other studies which showed females showing were more into obstetrics & gynaecology and peds ^(11,12,13) (Table 9). It has been seen that female students care less for income and prestige; rather they have more idealistic approach towards their profession choice.

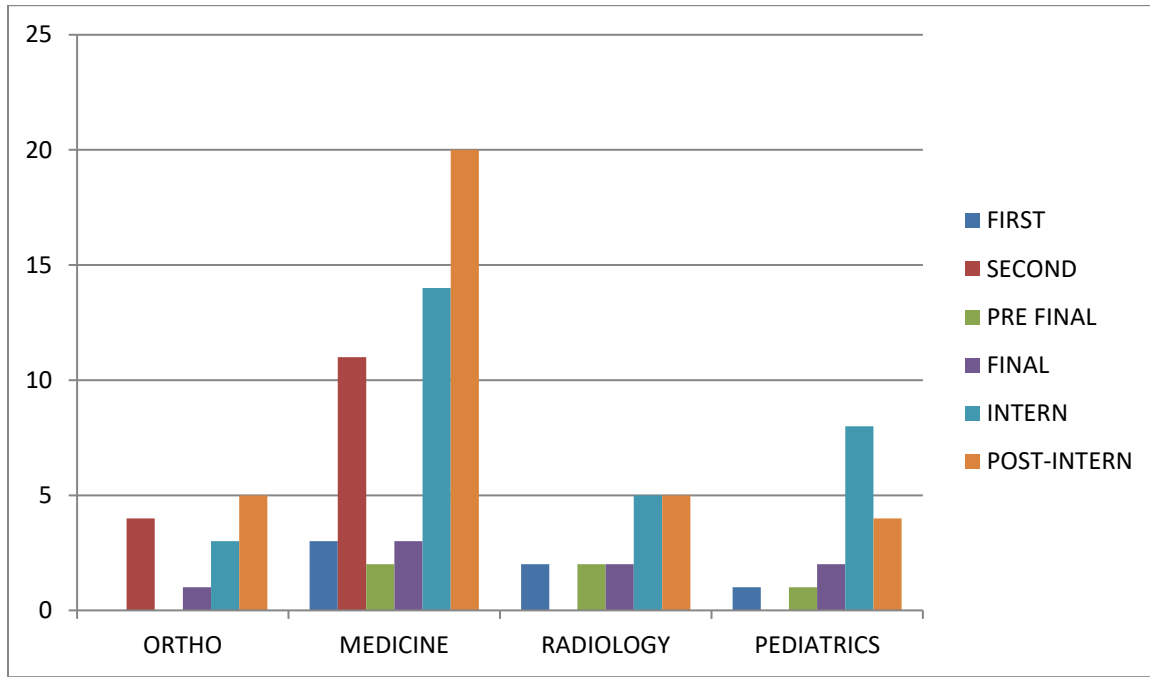


Table 8.

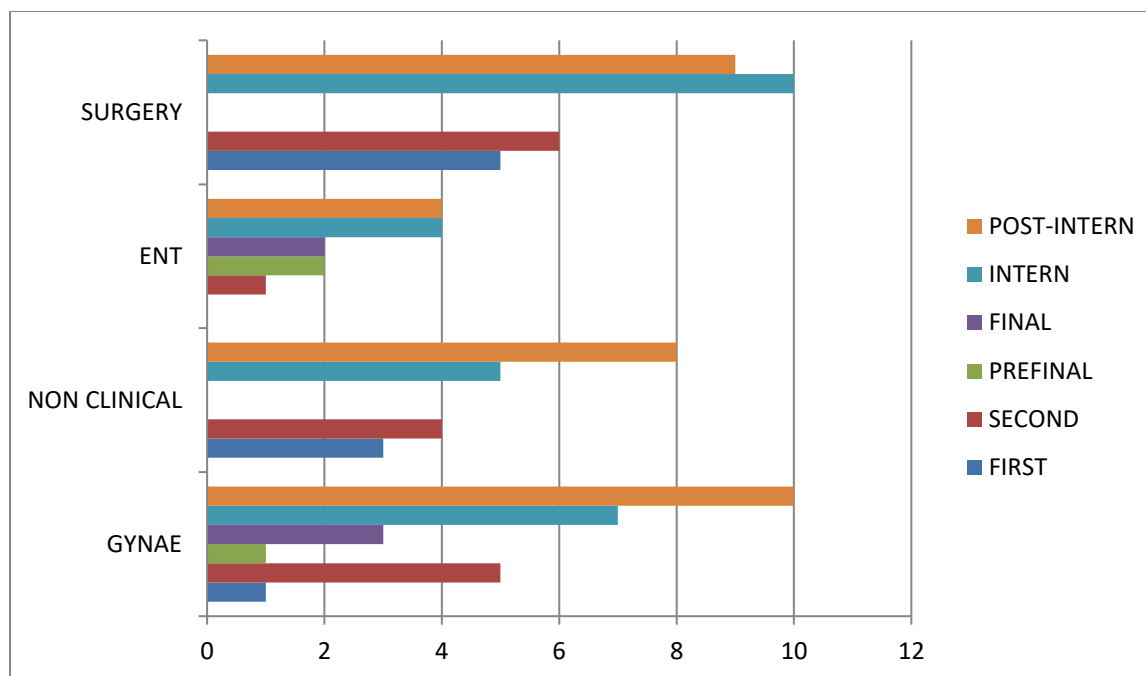


Table 9.

Our study showed us that medical students had chosen their future speciality preference except six (1.90%) who were still undecided and most of the students choose Internal medicine, surgery, obs & gyne and radiology respectively.

Factors such as parent’s educational background, gender and age have been mentioned as factors which might have influenced to varying degree on carrier selection ⁽¹⁴⁾. But factors behind choosing speciality preference are much more complex ⁽¹⁵⁾. It is yet to understand how medical students or graduate looks upon specialities and what is the impact of their understanding on their future selection.

India is a growing population and the need of doctors is ever increasing. Hence the policies towards encouraging the medical students to take up speciality of choice, so that the health care system would function smoothly.

In our study it was seen that around 42.5% of the student did not seek any advice regarding the future career in medical field. Therefore, a need for “career counselling” becomes utmost important. Here social media comes into play as nearly all the students are active on social media one way or the other. It will encourage medical student to join most demanding specialities ⁽¹⁶⁾.

As our study, mainly focus on the under graduates i.e. 1st year MBBS to those who have just completed their internship, their preferences were most likely to change while entering different phases. Although this survey did not follow up the students, it was noted that the distribution of student’s first priority changed through the course as first years choose surgery, while second years pick up medicine, in pre-final it was ophthalmology whereas in final year medicine again was most preferred one. It may be noted here that the preference of these student may have been different in earlier years of their carriers which may have been changed upon reaching a new level. It may either be due to love for subject, more clinical sense or some other factor. It is a matter for research.

In our study, 21.7% of the respondents rated “interesting diseases”, 18.26% rated “intellectual challenges”, 17.39% said “good income and quality life” and 15.65% students rated “patient care and contact” among others as a reason for their selection which is somewhat similar to the study in Jordan ⁽¹⁷⁾ not in numbers but in terms of the manner in

which speciality was chosen. Economy is one the major factor in determining the speciality in future and our showed it to be as high as 17.39%, where as a study in Kuwait shows it around 27.8%, in a study in china it was around 48%.

CONCLUSION

The present study reveals that the most preferred specialities among medical students were Medicine followed by surgery. There was diversity in the factors which inspire medical students to choose different modalities for their future. Some measures and guidance must be used by policymakers to provide students with structured career counselling to encourage those specialities that are taken up in less numbers in India and therefore better services to people of India.

LIMITATION

This study was conducted only in two medical college, thus it may not represent the trends in whole country. A large number of colleges which must include a large sample size must be taken to see the exact trends in choosing the specialities.

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