



# Physician Salaries: Equity, Incentives, and Health System Reform

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## **Aligning Incentives: Defining the Ends and the Means**

**Robert A. Berenson, MD**

**Senior Fellow, The Urban Institute**

## **Physician Income, Student Debt, and Specialty Choice**

**Atul Grover, PhD**

**Director, Government Relations, AAMC**

## **Moderator**

**Vincent D. Pellegrini, Jr, MD**

**Professor and Chair, Department of Orthopaedics, University of Maryland**



THE AMERICAN ORTHOPAEDIC ASSOCIATION





# Association of American Medical Colleges: Graduate Questionnaire 2008

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- **Completed annually by graduating medical students**
- **All accredited US medical schools**
- **Two parts:**
  - **School-specific experience**
  - **General specialty choice, debt, cultural environment**
- **13,400 students responded**



# AAMC Graduate Questionnaire 2008

## Debt

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- Graduating debt load increased for 5<sup>th</sup> consecutive year
- Mean \$141,751
  - \$10,000 greater than in 2007
- 18% had educational debt in excess of \$200,000
  - 5% in 2004
- ? Result of low interest / readily available loans ?



# AAMC Graduate Questionnaire 2008

## Specialty Choice

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- **Sharp increase in:**
  - **Primary care specialties**
  - **Working with underserved populations**
- **Major drivers of specialty choice**
  - 1) **Content of specialty**
  - 2) **Fit with personal interests and skills**
  - 3) **Mentor / role model's influence**
- **9.2% said debt would have a “strong influence” on choice**



# AAMC Graduate Questionnaire 2008 Specialty Choice

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- **#1 Internal Medicine - 16%**
  - **5.1% in 2007**
- **Other specialties with major increases in popularity**
  - **Obstetrics / Gynecology**
  - **Pediatrics**
- **Nearly 30% interested in practicing in underserved areas**
  - **5 year high**
  - **> 8 percentage points higher than 2007**



# AAMC Graduate Questionnaire 2008

## Health Care System

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- **Increasing numbers (3-4%) of students expressed ...**
  - **“Inadequate” education in health policy**
  - **“Inadequate” education in health services financing**
- **Increasing numbers “strongly agreed”...**
  - **Health care financing “too burdensome on physicians”**
  - **Changes in health care “impairing physician independence”**



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# American Orthopaedic Association: Resident Leadership Forum 2008

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## **Professionalism, Role Modeling, and Mentorship: The Impact on Your Career**

**71 PGY-IV residents from US orthopaedic programs**

**Selected by chairs/program directors**

**18 pre-meeting questions – by anonymous response**



THE AMERICAN ORTHOPAEDIC ASSOCIATION





# AOA: Resident Leadership Forum 2008

**Rank (#1 is top choice) factors that influenced your career choice:**

Answer Options	1	2	3	4	5	Rating Average
Musculoskeletal science	11	38	9	6	4	2.323529
Musculoskeletal patient care	49	13	1	4	1	1.455882
The work hours and call	0	2	11	41	12	3.954545
Salary and compensation	2	12	43	9	1	2.925373
Other	5	3	2	3	8	3.285714

**Other:**

**professional culture of orthopaedics, application to health care needs in underprivileged societies, role models, one's calling**



# AOA: Resident Leadership Forum 2008

**Rank (#1 is top choice) factors that you believe influenced your classmates non-orthopaedic career choice:**

Answer Options	1	2	3	4	5	Rating Average
Type of science	5	10	16	31	3	3.261539
Type of patient care	29	17	16	3	3	2.029412
The work house and call	26	20	14	7	1	2.073529
Salary and compensation	6	22	17	20	2	2.850746
Other	2	1	3	1	6	3.615385

**Other:**

**Lifestyle (2), perceived lack of strength and stamina, difficulty to match**



# AOA: Resident Leadership Forum 2008

**Rank (#1 is top choice) factors that are most important to you in choosing private vs. academic practice :**

Answer Options	1	2	3	4	5	Rating Average
Teaching	23	17	13	10	4	2
Research	7	9	15	14	23	4
Salary	8	15	14	19	6	3
Surgery	21	20	12	8	5	2
Work Hours	5	7	12	16	22	4
Other	4	0	0	0	2	2

**Other:**

**Interested in teaching, autonomy, work hard but be compensated for my hard work, rigors of academic position cut into family life**



# AOA: Resident Leadership Forum 2008

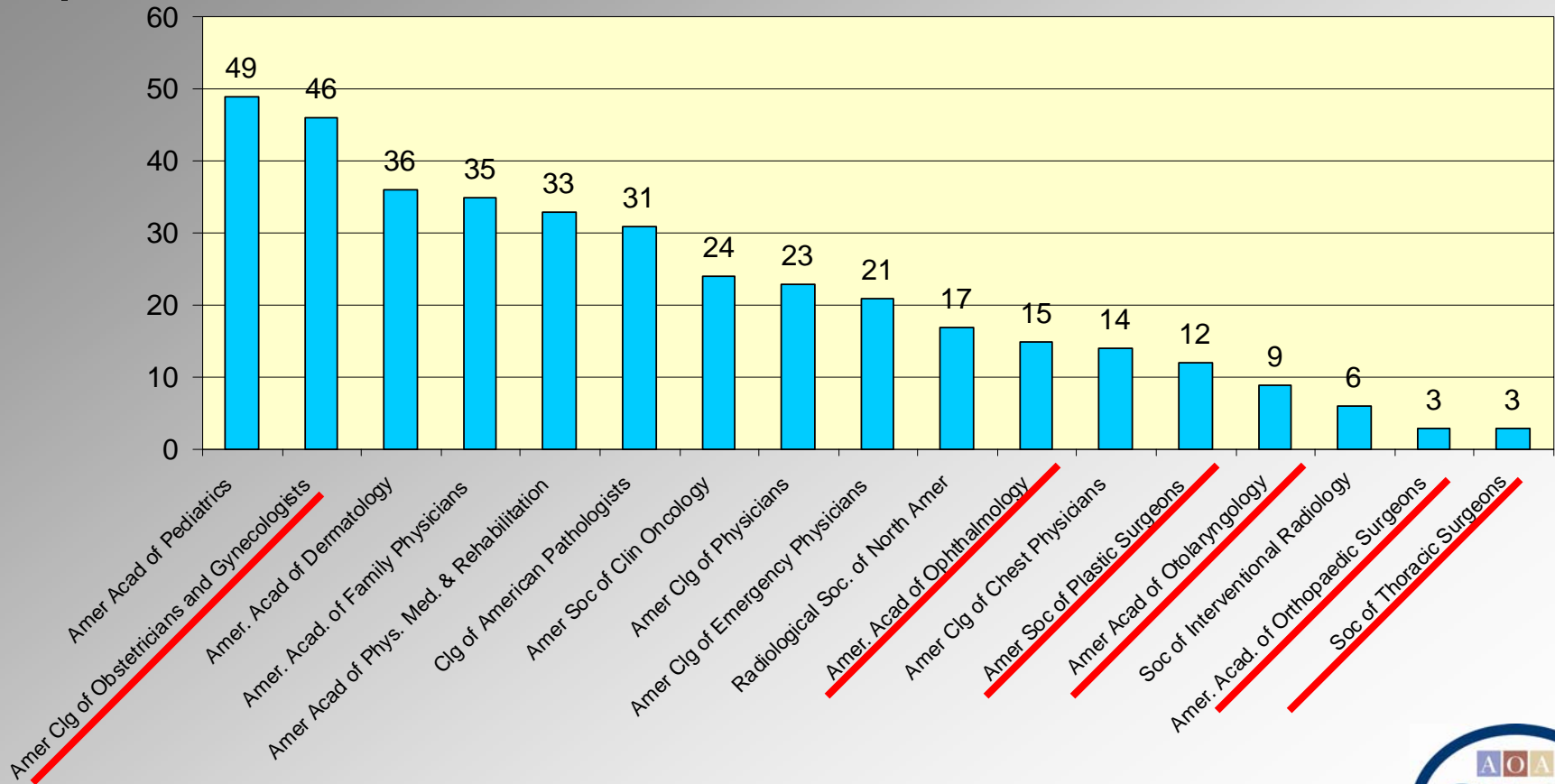
**I am at ease handing over the care of my patients to my fellow resident, hospitalist, or other physician at the end of my shift.**

Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Disagree	8.7%
Disagree	13.0%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	18.8%
Agree	49.3%
Strongly Agree	10.1%

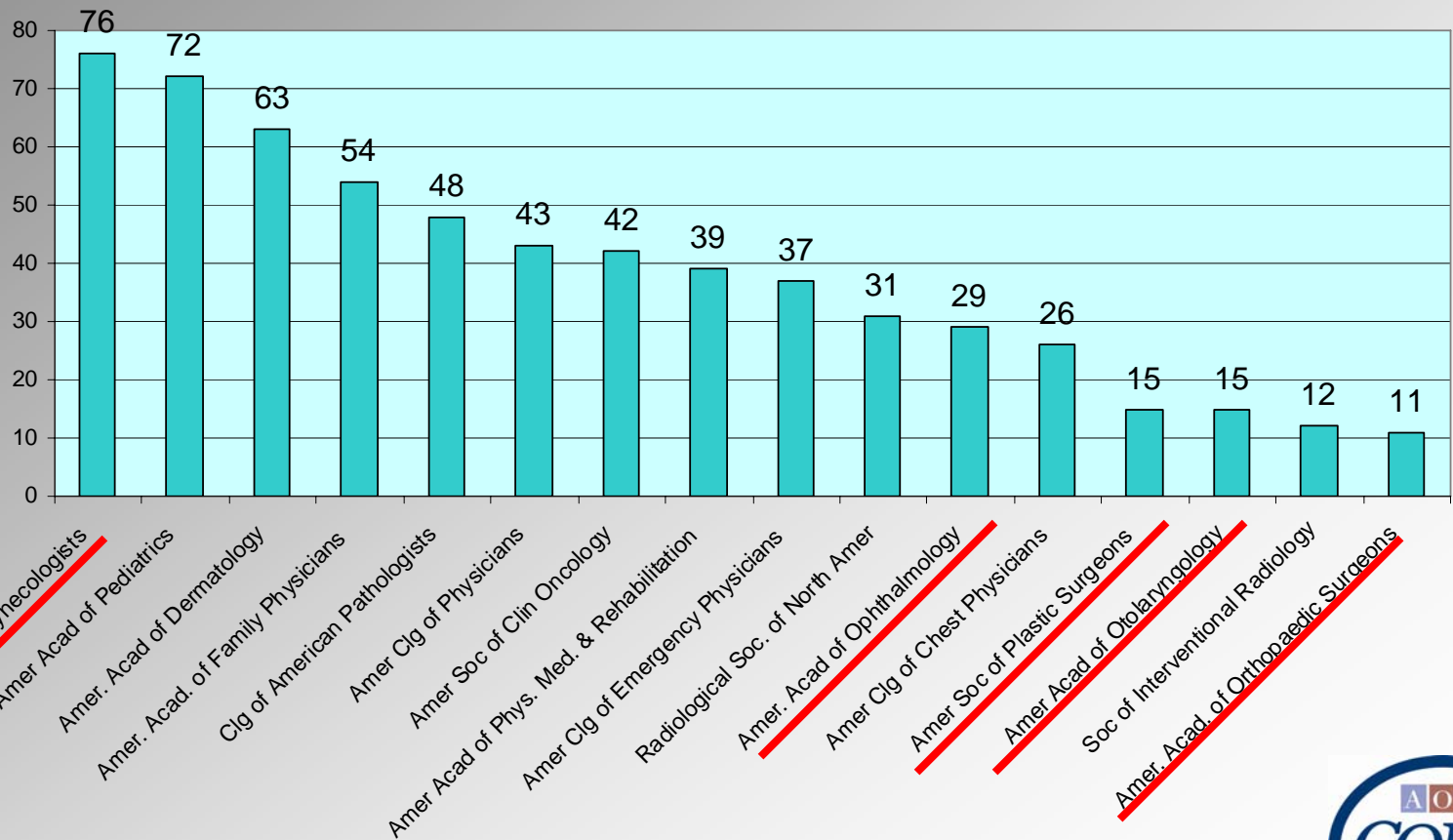
**Other:**

**Interested in teaching, autonomy, work hard but be compensated for my hard work, rigors of academic position cut into family life**

# What percentage of your board-certified members is female?

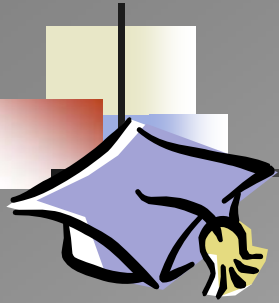


# What percentage of the residents in your specialty is female?



# Orthopaedic Sub-Specialties

*Number of female medical school graduates,  
selected specialties\**



	<u>1997</u>	<u>2007</u>
↔ Adult Reconstruction	0	0
↑ Foot and Ankle	0	3
↑ Hand	9	20
↑ Pediatric	3	7
↓ Spine (#1 <u>most</u> lucrative)	2	0
↑ Sports Medicine	2	6
↔ Trauma (#2 most lucrative)	0	0



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**Drivers of medical student specialty choice are *changing*:**

- **Content attraction**
- **Mentors and role models**
- **“Fit” with personal interests and skills**
- **Generational differences – priority of lifestyle and family**
- **Gender preferences – predominantly female graduates**
- **Economics of salary and indebtedness**