

---

# The Role of an M-2 Careers in Medicine Elective in Student Career Decision-Making

---

Anita M. Navarro, M.Ed.  
Curriculum Consultant

Sonya Lawson, Ph.D.  
Evaluation Studies

Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine  
Richmond, VA

---

# Introduction

- Since 2004, the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine has sponsored an M-2 Careers in Medicine (CiM) elective course.
  - Based on the implementation of the elective, questions arose about how students make their decisions, the role the elective may play and how to improved the elective around student decision-making.
  - An IRB-approved study was launched to further determine factors that impact these students' career choices and how the Careers in Medicine elective might affect their decisions.
  - Findings from two years of survey data will be presented to offer participants an understanding of how one medical school has begun to examine the ways in which our students choose specialties and the implications for facilitating career development with an M-2 elective course.
-

---

# M-2 Careers in Medicine Elective

## Background

- First M2 Careers in Medicine Elective taught in Spring 2004 with 19 students
  - Based on positive student review of the pilot, we continued to offer the elective in 2005 w/about 40 students in 2 sections and in 2006 w/ about 60 in 3 sections
-

---

# M-2 Careers in Medicine Elective

## Course Philosophy

- View careers not just in terms of obtaining a desired residency, but also as a developmental process over a lifetime
  - Offer a structured, for-credit experience with practical activities that students already should be doing now and in their future
  - Design the class for busy medical students by limiting most course activities to the six sessions
  - Affirm the undecided student
-

---

# M-2 Careers in Medicine Elective

## Course Design

- Six, three-hour sessions (based on the traditional structure of electives, for-credit)
  - Course Requirements
    - Attend all sessions and participate
    - Write a CV
    - Conduct, write-up and present an information interview
  - Used Careers in Medicine (CiM) program extensively  
<http://www.aamc.org/students/cim/start.htm>
-

---

# M-2 Careers in Medicine Elective

## Course Implementation: Topics

### ■ **Personal Assessment**

- Careers in Medicine Website
- Personality Inventories (HBDI, MBTI)
- Murdoch Survey
- Values Auction

### ■ **Exploration**

- Careers in Medicine Website
- Overview of The Match
- Balancing Life's Choices (faculty panel discussions)
- Informational Interviewing
- Practice Options in Medicine

### ■ **Decision-Making**

- Financial Planning & Considerations
- Models of Decision-making
- Reflection & Future Planning

### ■ **Personal Development/Skill Building**

- CV Writing
- Personal Statement Writing
- Assertiveness

### ■ **Decision Implementation**

- M-4 Panel Discussion on The Match
  - Personal Transitions
-

---

# M-2 Careers in Medicine Elective

## Course Implementation: Session Presenters

- **University/Community**

- Career Center
- Counseling Center
- Medical Society of VA

- **SOM**

- Anesthesiology
- ENT
- Emergency Medicine
- Family Medicine
- Internal Medicine
- Neurology
- Neurosurgery

- **SOM, cont'd.**

- Obstetrics-Gynecology
  - Orthopedics
  - Pathology
  - Pediatrics
  - Psychiatry
  - PM&R
  - Radiology
  - Surgery
  - Residents & M-4 students
  - Student Activities
  - Student Outreach Programs
  - Curriculum Office
  - Financial Aid
-

---

# M-2 Careers in Medicine Elective

## Facilitators & Enrollment

- 2004 (one section, 19 students)
    - Paul Munson, Ed.D./Family Medicine
    - Diane Biskobing, M.D. /Internal Medicine & Curriculum Office
    - Anita Navarro, M.Ed./Curriculum Office
  - 2005 (two sections, 40 students)
    - Diane Biskobing, M.D.
    - Anita Navarro, M.Ed.
  - 2006 (three sections, 60 students)
    - Isaac Wood, M.D./Student Affairs & Psychiatry
    - Jeanne Schlesinger, M.Ed./Office of Faculty and Instructional Development
    - Diane Biskobing, M.D.
    - Anita Navarro, M.Ed.
    - Brian Lingerfelt, M-4
    - Michael DeWitt, M-4
    - Kate Noller, M-4
    - Sin Kei Young, M-4
  - 2007 Course (185 students)
    - Indra Kancitis, M.D./ Pediatrics & Foundations of Clinical Medicine Course
    - Anita Navarro, M.Ed.
  - 2007 Elective (one section, 20 students)
    - Anita Navarro, M.Ed.
    - Ramesh Grandhi, M-4
    - Andrew Bogle, M-4
-

---

# M-2 Careers in Medicine Courses 2006-2007

- New, Fall Requirement for all M-2 Students
    - Requirements
      - attend all sessions
      - write a CV to turn in for review
    - Six, one-hour lunchtime lectures on:
      - Overview of The Match
      - CV Writing
      - Practice Options
      - 2 Panels with Residency Directors
      - Personal Statement Writing
  - Spring Elective
    - 4 sessions, 3 hours each
    - 20 students participating
    - Piloting textbook and new topics
-

---

# Questions

- How do students decide about their specialties?
  - What career development programs can be developed (or changed) based on how students make their specialty choices?
  - How can a course help (or hinder)?
-

---

# M-4 Career Decision Survey Development

- Drafted a pilot on-line survey for spring 2006
  - Many open-ended questions
  - Reviewed with key faculty on our campus and at AAMC
  - Sent to IRB for approval
  - Launched with Class of 2006, the first class for which the M2 elective was offered
  - Conducted the data analysis; coded the open-ended questions
  - Updated questions with distracters based on data analysis coding
  - Re-sent to IRB
  - Data analysis for Class of 2006
-

---

# M-4 Career Decision Survey

## 2006 & 2007 Results

### ■ Response Rates

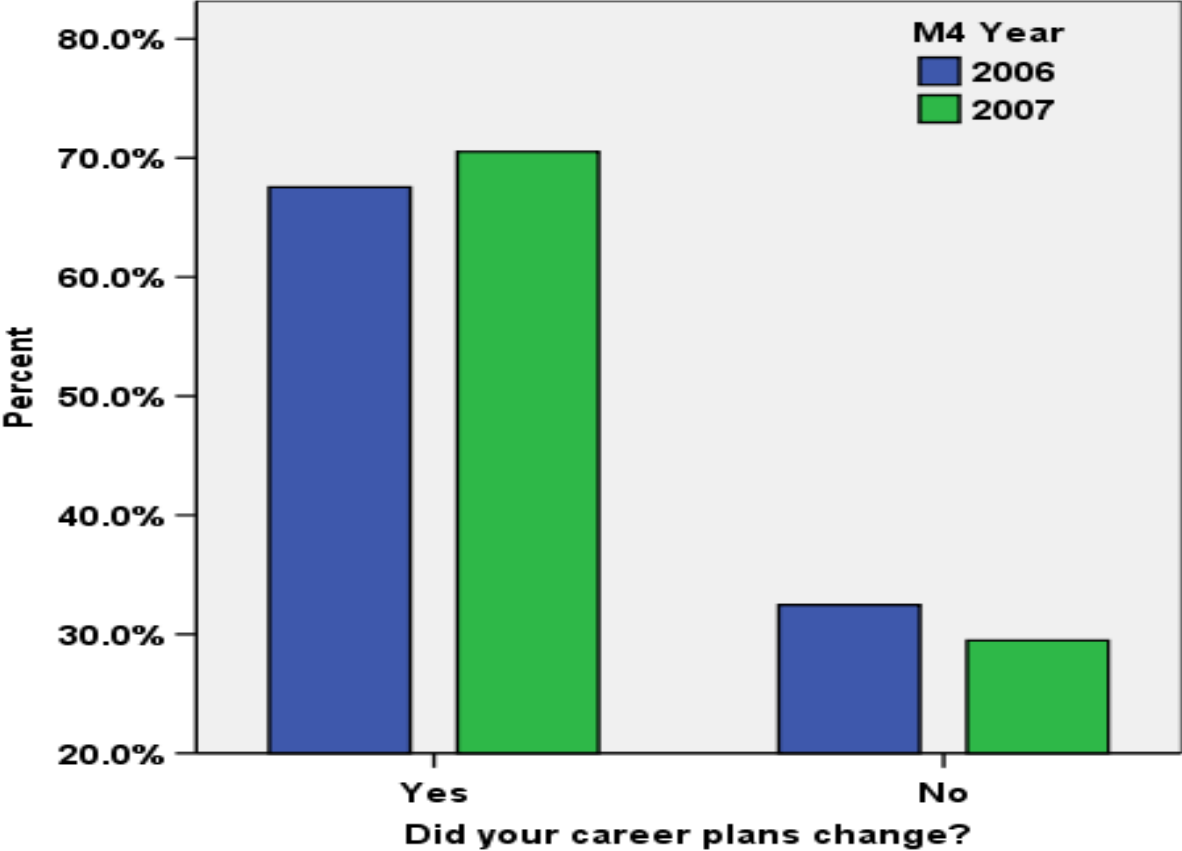
- Class of 2006: 76% (123/160)
    - 17% indicated they took the M2 Careers in Medicine Elective
  - Class of 2007: 56% (96/171)
    - 25% indicated they took the M2 Careers in Medicine Elective.
-

---

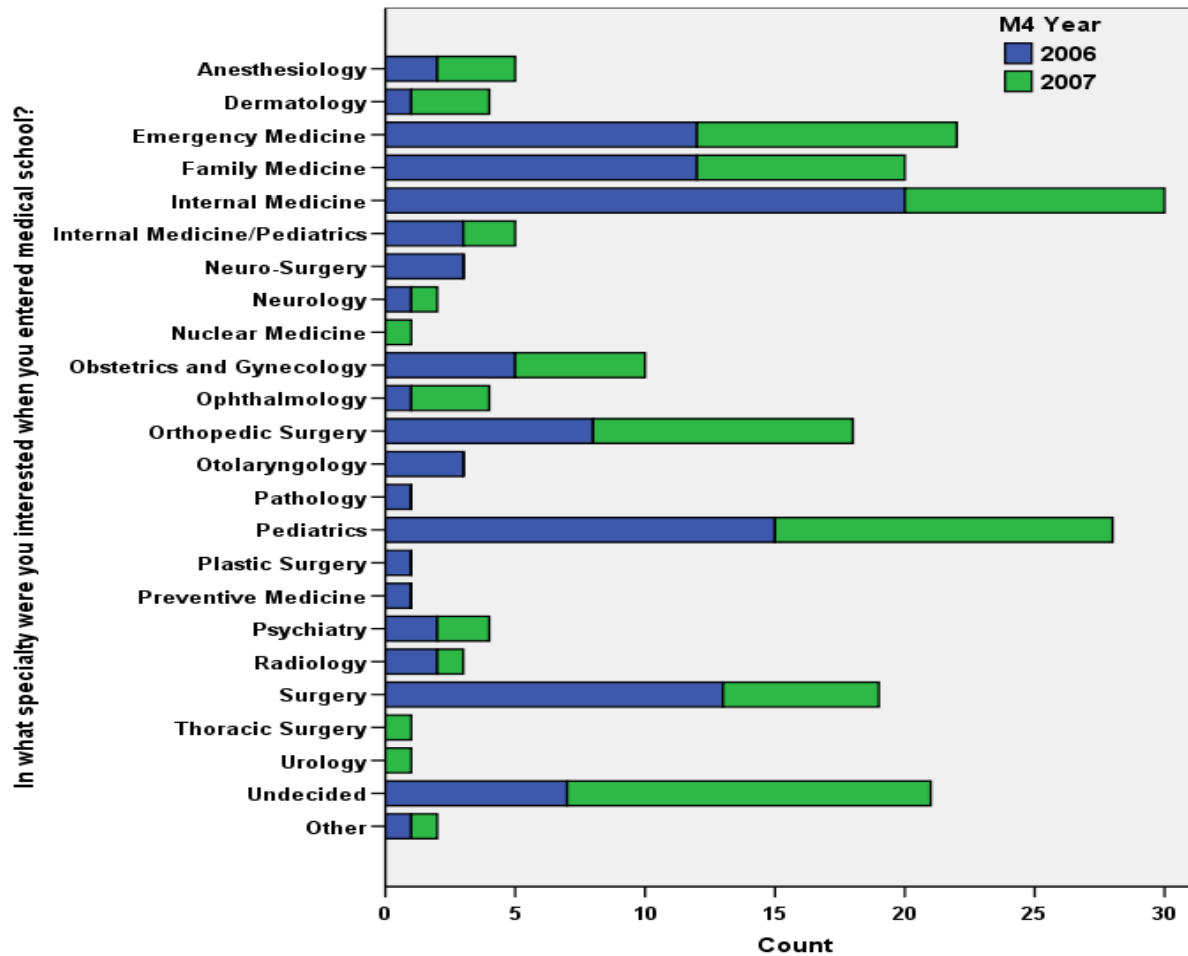
# Demographics of Survey Respondents

- Class of 2006
    - Gender
      - 44.7% Female
      - 47.9% Male
      - (9 non-respondents)
    - Age
      - 74.8% 25-29
      - 13% 30-34
      - 4% 35 and older
      - (9 non-respondents)
    - Ethnicity
      - 4% African American
      - 22.7% Asian/Pacific Islander
      - 60.1% White
      - 2.4% Other
      - 13 non-respondents/do not wish to answer
    - Marital Status
      - 64.2% Single
      - 27% Married
  - Class of 2007
    - Gender
      - 49% Female
      - 50% Male
      - (1 non-respondent)
    - Age
      - 79% 25-29
      - 15% 30-34
      - 3% 35 and older
      - (1 non-respondent)
    - Ethnicity
      - 4% African American
      - 21.8% Asian/Pacific Islander
      - 69.1% White
      - 4.2% Other
      - 1 non-respondents
    - Marital Status
      - 54% Single
      - 45% Married
-

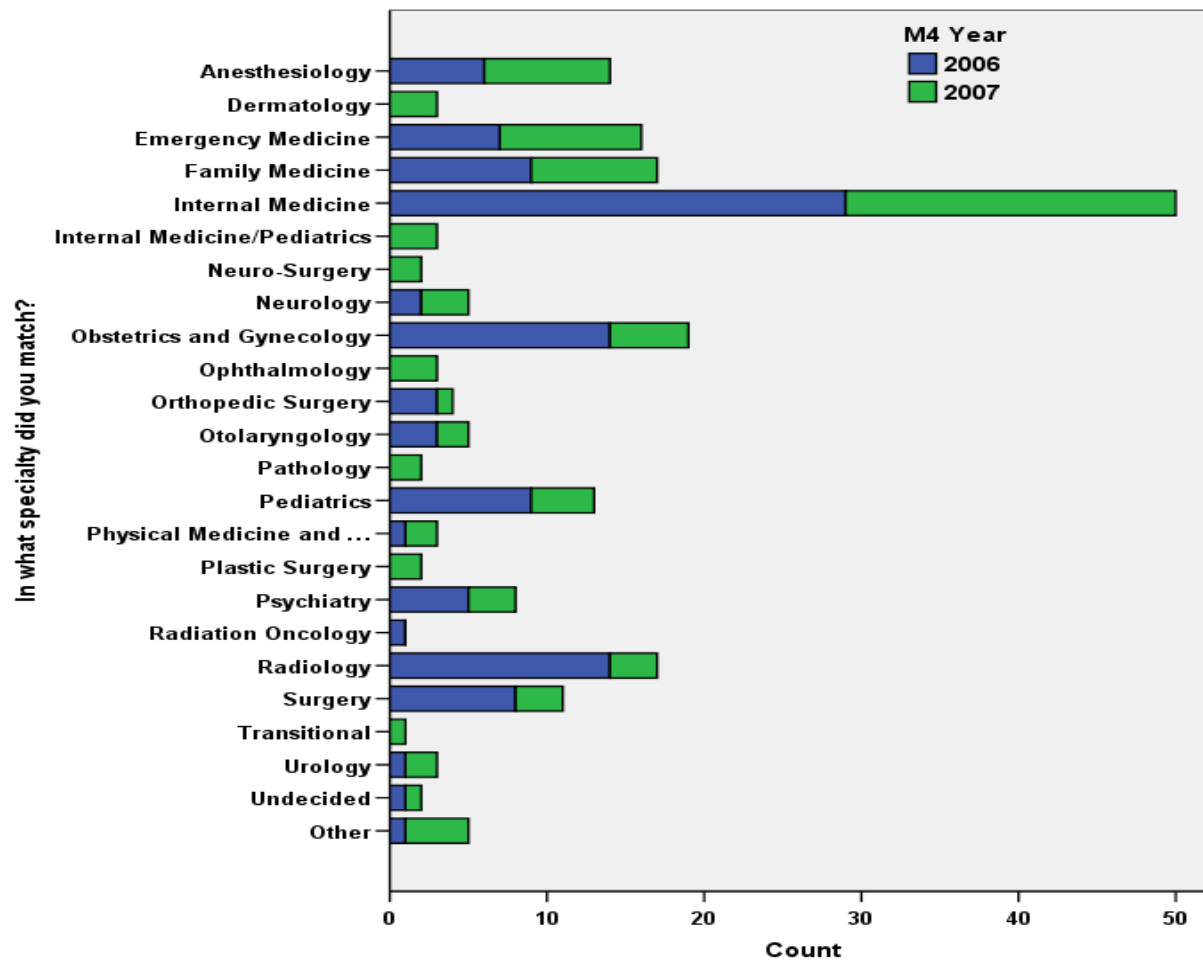
# Did your career plans change?



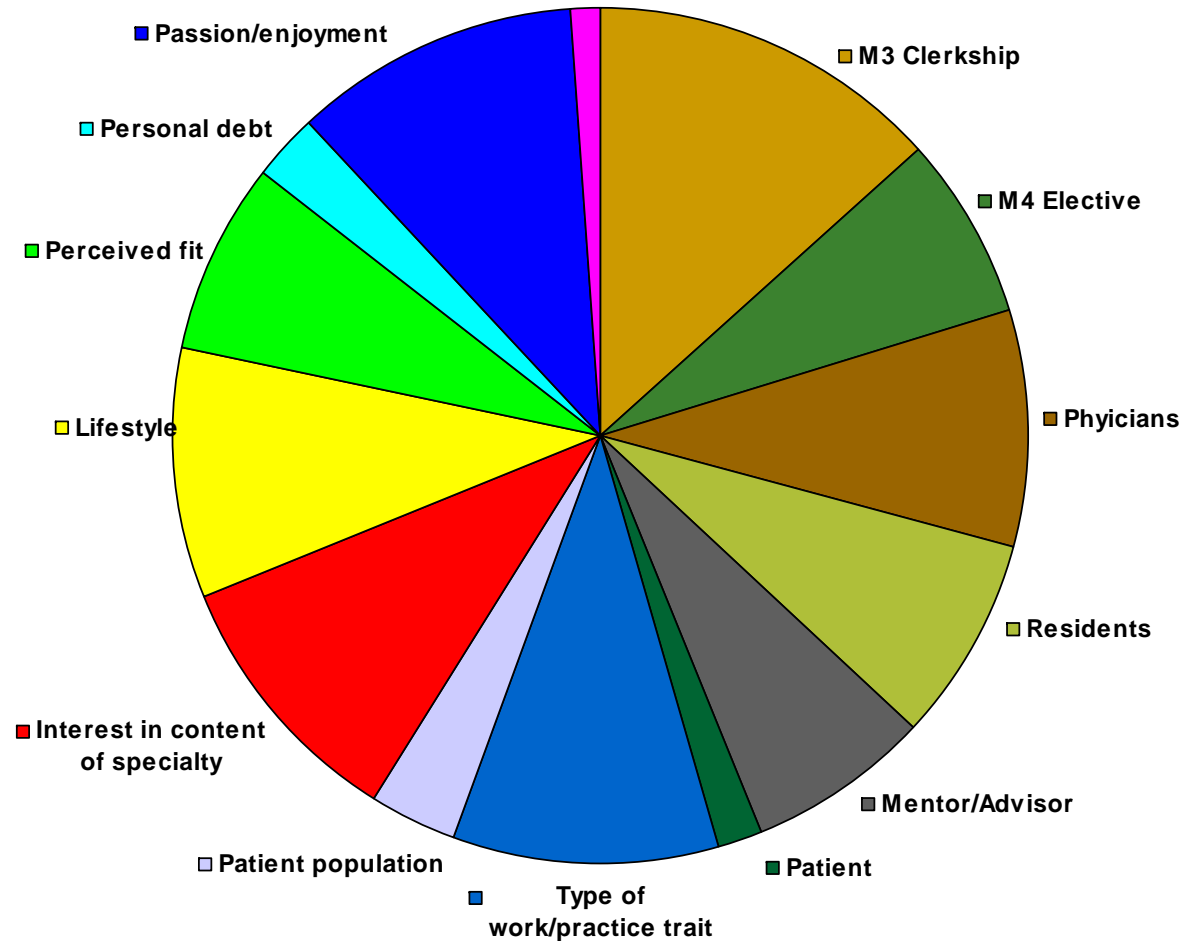
# Specialty Interest Upon Matriculation



# Specialty Interest Matched

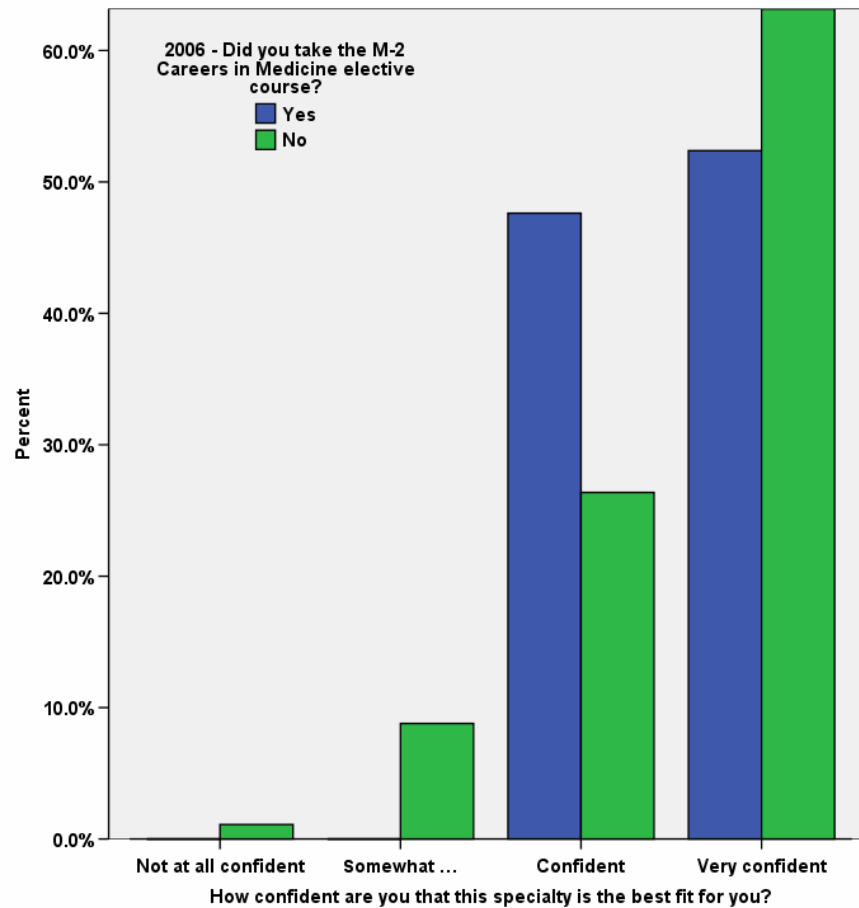


# What factors made you decide on a different specialty?



# Level of Confidence in Specialty Choice

## Class of 2006

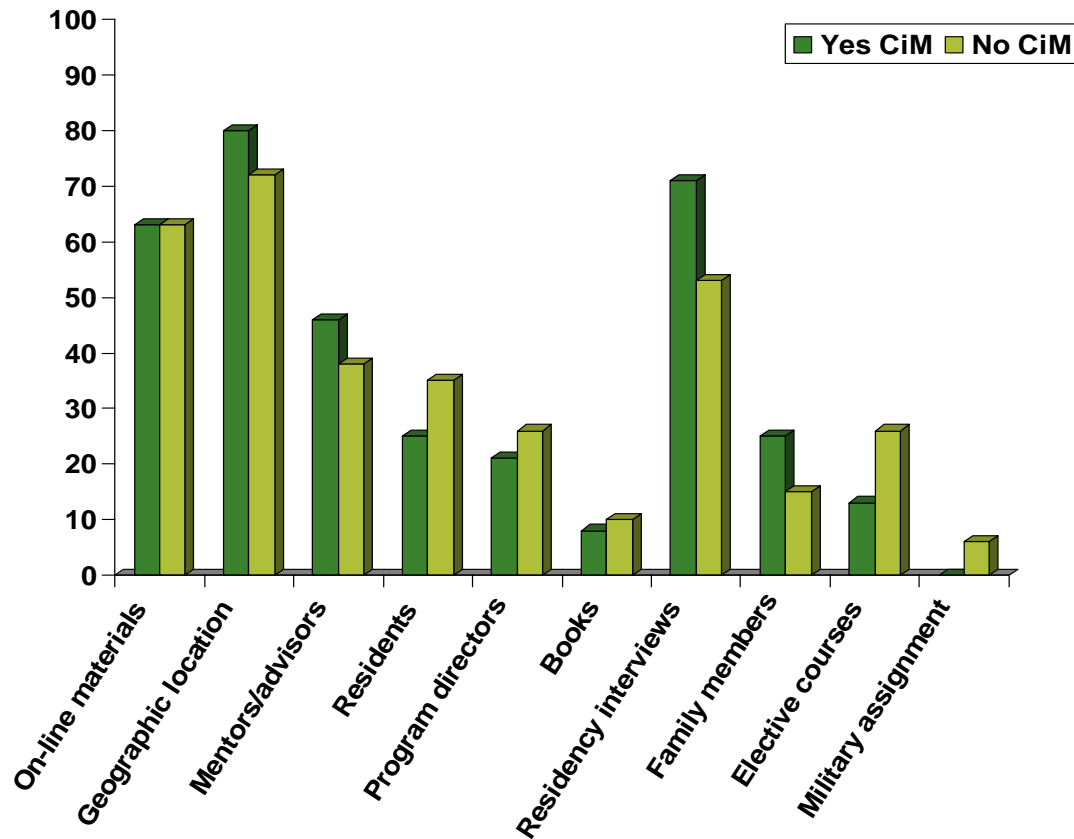


# Level of Confidence in Specialty Choice

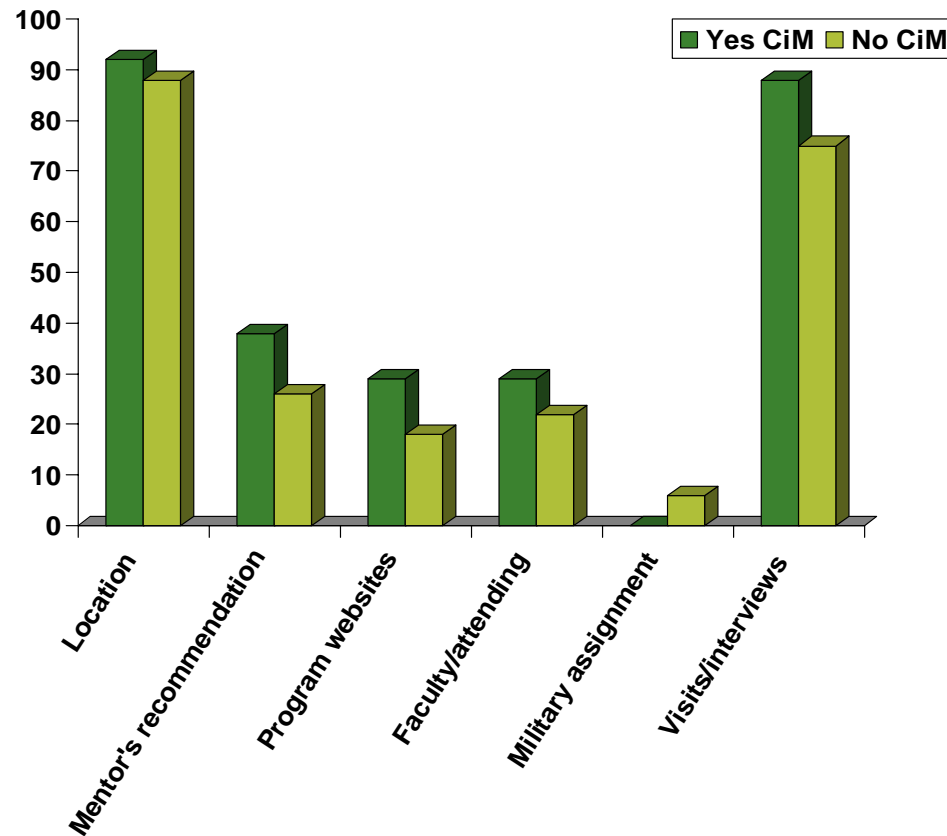
## Class of 2007



# What helped you find your residency program?



# What factors affected your decision about choosing a residency program?



---

## M-2 Careers in Medicine Course help you in your choice of specialty?

### ■ 2006

- 21 students indicated they took the course:
  - Yes – 15
  - No – 3
  - Don't know – 3

### ■ 2007

- 24 students indicated that they took the course:
    - Yes – 12
    - No – 3
    - Don't know – 7
    - No answer – 2
-

---

## Why or why not?

- “If nothing else, it taught me where to look for information. It also got me thinking about things to look for. Having my CV done prior to 3<sup>rd</sup> year was extremely helpful also.”
  - “It connected me with a great mentor attending.”
  - “It gave me the framework to think about my decisions. It also gave me validation that it was OK to consider ‘all’ of my thoughts – it’s okay to think about lifestyle, location and such, not just the details about my specialty.”
-

---

Would a six session class covering a variety of topics on career decisions have been helpful in making your specialty choice?

- Class of 2007
    - Yes -- 23
    - No -- 14
    - Don't know – 34
    - No answer - 71
-

---

# Please explain your answer.

- “A class does not replace the actual experience.”
  - “Exposure to different specialties that I may overlook would be VERY valuable.”
  - “I am undecided because I feel that the clerkships were a great introduction to the different specialties, but I did not have exposure to many of the subspecialties.”
  - “I feel pretty good about my ability to analyze information, talk to people and make decisions that are best suited to my desires and abilities.”
  - “I think that choosing a career is a gut decision – just knowing what fits you best. And that isn’t something you can teach.”
  - “I wish I had a course to help me. It was an agonizing decision.”
-

---

# Conclusions

- Approximately 70% of VCU medical students change their minds about their specialty choice during medical school.
  - M-3 Clerkships play a key role in the decision-making process for medical students. Exactly what their role is should be further explored.
  - Debt does not appear to play a large part in our students' career decisions, but lifestyle, passion and type of work does.
-

---

# Conclusions

- The concept of “Lifestyle” should be explored further.
  - Location and Interviews appear to be key factors for our students’ residency program decisions.
  - An elective course can help some students work on their career development issues.
  - We need to do a better job of identifying students who need help, but don’t realize it.
-