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# Breaking Down Barriers:

## Identifying Career Indecision

Jeanette Calli, Program Manager  
Carissa Englert, Research Assistant  
Careers in Medicine

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Association of  
American Medical Colleges

# Careers in Medicine

A comprehensive, four-phase/four-year career planning program

Provides medical students with a strategy for:

- Understanding themselves and their specialty options
- Choosing a specialty and residency program

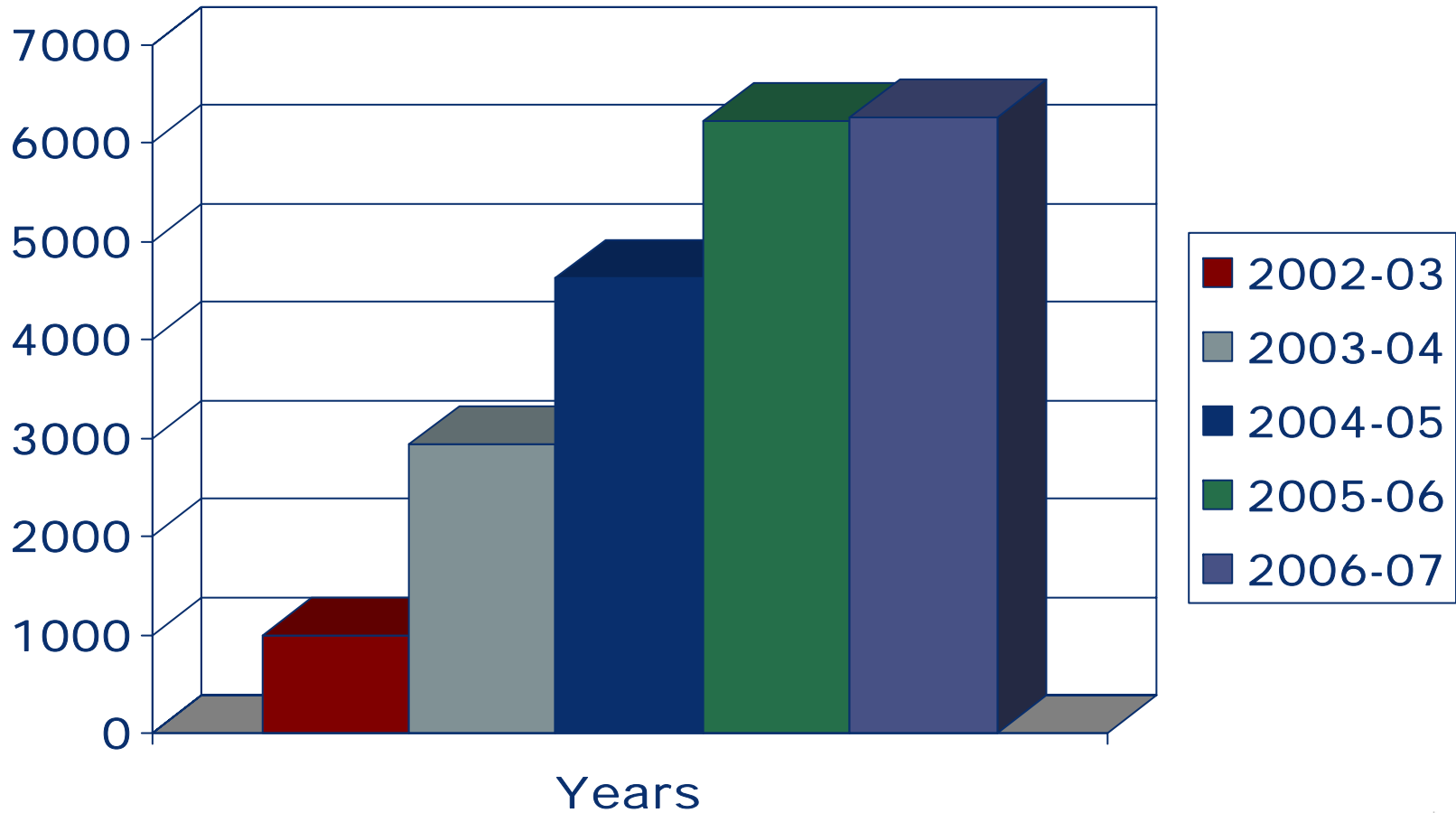
Print and web resources available including self-assessment tools and extensive specialty information

Resources, training and support provided to schools to assist them in implementing the program.

# Session Objectives

- Describe career indecision
- Introduce Specialty Indecision Scale, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition
- Describe SIS use in CiM

# Annual CiM M1 Registrations



# Program Realities

- Students busy with school
- Students not familiar with CiM resources and the career planning process
- Consequently, many students don't know where to start

# What's Needed?

- For Students:
  - More appropriate guidance in choosing a specialty
  - More efficient utilization of CiM
- For Advisors and Liaisons:
  - To understand the barriers students' are facing in their specialty choice
  - Suggestions on how to help students

# Our Solution: Specialty Indecision Scale, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition

- Identifies student difficulties in specialty choice
- Personalized results identifying both the concerns of the students and steps they can take to alleviate them
- Helps students navigate through CiM process

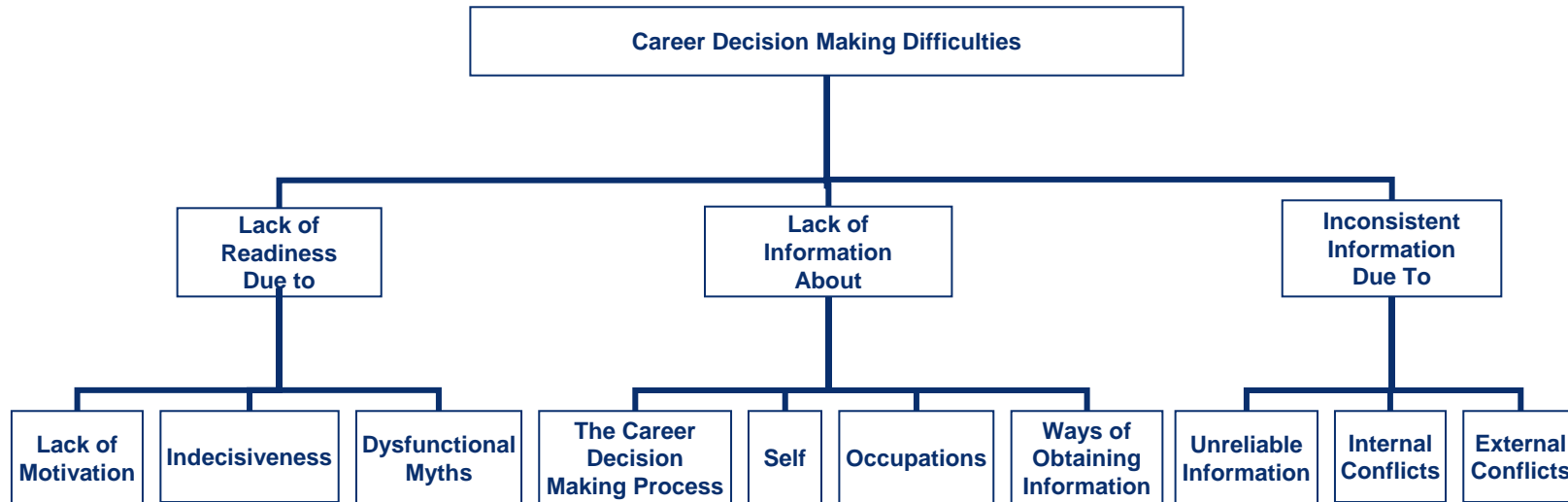
# Why Measure Career Indecision?

- Different types of indecision require different interventions
- Students can follow appropriate path to making sound, effective career choices

# Step 1 - Item Development

- Based on
  - a Taxonomy of Career Decision-Making Difficulties – Gati, Krausz & Osipow
    - Identified major causes of indecision:
      - Ten difficulties
      - Center around Information deficits, cognitive and emotional processes inhibiting decision-making, and external factors
  - Savickas and Osipow's original Specialty Indecision Scale
    - Focuses on medical careers
- Wrote specialty choice related questions to fit each of the 10 difficulties

# Gati & Osipow's Taxonomy of Career Decision-Making Difficulties



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## Step 2 – Initial Data Collection

- Draft instrument development
- Administered via web
- Responses from over 1,500 medical students in 50 schools
- Psychometric analysis included factor analysis, reliability, and norming based on gender, race and year in school

# Step 3 - National Panel on Career Decision Making Difficulties

- 25 CiM liaisons
- Reviewed each item and provided suggested interventions
- Responses compiled and organized, sent back to panel for final review
- Results incorporated into SIS report

# About The Instrument

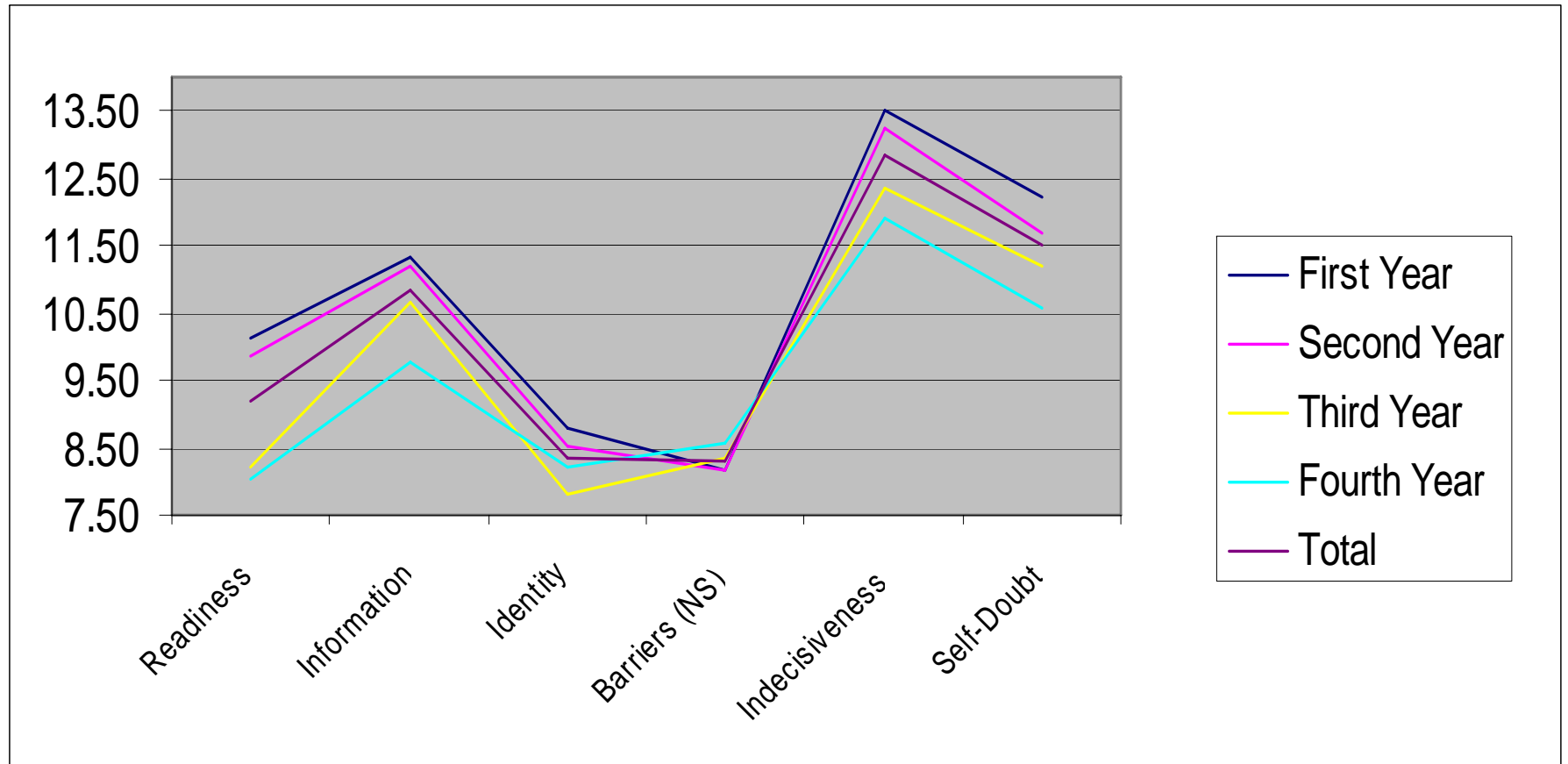
- Online administration
- 35 items
- Asks about areas that cause students difficulty in choosing a specialty
- Comprehensive report covers six scales
  - Readiness, Information, Identity, Barriers, Indecisiveness, Self-Doubt
  - Other Concerns
- Feedback from National Panel for both students and advisors

# How it works - Demonstration

Web site – From the Home page or Understanding Yourself

- Information and Administration
- Report page
  - Summary
  - Scale reports
  - Student feedback
- SIS Interactive Manual

# Mean SIS Scale Scores by Year in School



# Students' Top 5 Concerns

- **I need to know how different specialties impact the balance between work and other life roles (Other Concerns)**
- **I like parts of many different specialties (Indecisiveness)**
- **I need more information about requirements and responsibilities of different specialties (Other Concerns)**
- **I've identified some good specialty choices, but can't decide among them (Indecisiveness)**
- **People are telling me different things about the same specialty (Other Concerns)**

# Summary

## Our vision:

- For the SIS to be the first step in creating a career guidance plan for students
- A useful tool for both students and advisors where:
  - Students can take ownership of the process and get personalized assistance with their concerns
  - Advisors can get ideas about how to help students with the challenges they are facing

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[www.aamc.org/meetings](http://www.aamc.org/meetings)

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