

# OTORHINOLARYNGOLOGY AS A BRANCH FOR POSTGRADUATION BY MEDICAL GRADUATES - FACTORS AFFECTING THE CHOICE OF SPECIALITY

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## ABSTRACT

### INTRODUCTION

The medical specialty chosen by the medical practitioner is important for both the practitioner and the society. It is an important determinant of the future supply of doctors in different specialties and the planning of the workforce for the health-care services.

### METHODOLOGY

In order to assess factors affecting the choice of post graduation specialty by medical graduates with special reference to Otorhinolaryngology in Mayo Institute of Medical Sciences, Barabanki; the study was conducted as a cross-sectional questionnaire-based study.

### CONCLUSION

The factors involved in career-related decision making are mostly context-specific. One of the reasons for this is that models of medical education and selection into specialty programs vary globally. We thus conclude that the most meritorious medical graduates in India do not choose ENT as a branch for postgraduation, unlike developed nations and the association must take steps to improve the situation

**Keywords :** Otorhinolaryngology, Postgraduation, Choice of Speciality

### INTRODUCTION

Postgraduate training may be considered to be a transition from the relatively undifferentiated, "stem doctor", potentially capable of entering any

specialty, to the final, fully-differentiated specialist who is almost entirely restricted to one specialized area of medical work. (1) The number of career specialties in medicine has dramatically increased, parallel to the expansion of knowledge in different fields. Given the numerous and diverse options to choose from, the factors that influence the preferences of medical students and interns in India are not well understood. It is known that even at the time of entering a program; medical students have several preconceived notions about the profession and that there is also a general inclination towards certain specialties. (2) The factors involved in career-related decision-making are also context-specific. One of the reasons for this is that models of medical education and selection into specialty programs vary globally. The perceptions and career preferences of Indian medical students and interns are not well understood. A study conducted at Kasturba Medical College, Manipal showed that students considered personal interest, job opportunities, and income prospects while choosing a specialty; however, the study did not compare differences across students at various stages of the degree program (3). A study conducted at University College of Medical Sciences, Delhi compared the preferences and motivational factors among students in different years of the degree program; the authors observed that personal interest, interest due to exposure, the perceived reputation of the specialty, lifestyle, income potential, opportunities to settle abroad, and career

progression were some of the significant factors considered by students (4) Some studies done earlier have suggested that the clinical experiences along with Sociocultural values,(4) have a major impact on the decision about education after undergraduate studies. (5)

## AIM OF THE STUDY

The reasons why medical students choose their careers are complex, and still remain partially understood. We conducted this study to identify the factors affecting the choice of post graduation specialty by medical graduates with special reference to Otorhinolaryngology as we feel that Understanding the factors that influence career decisions may help in workforce planning in different specialties

## METHODOLOGY

### Study design

In order to assess factors affecting the choice of post graduation specialty by medical graduates with special reference to Otorhinolaryngology in Mayo Institute of Medical Sciences, Barabanki; the study was conducted as a cross- sectional questionnaire-based study.

### Study groups

The Undergraduates in Mayo Institute of Medical Sciences, Barabanki

### Sample size

In this study the sample size of 300 participants was estimated by the standard formula used for the sample size calculation of cross-sectional studies.

### Inclusion and exclusion criterion

Only Undergraduate students in Mayo Institute of Medical Sciences, Barabanki was included in the study including students currently doing Internship.

### Study duration

The study was carried out in the span from 1st June 2021 to 7th June 2021.

### Study site

The online study was conducted using the

Google forms in the department of Otorhinolaryngology, Mayo Institute of Medical Sciences, Barabanki

## Study tool

An online semi-structured questionnaire was developed, with a consent form attached to it. The link of the questionnaire was sent through e-mails, Whatsapp, and other social media to the students. On receiving and clicking the link, the participants got auto directed to the information about the study and informed consent. Once they accepted to take the survey, they filled up the demographic details. Then, a set of several questions appeared sequentially, which the participants were to answer.

## Data scoring

The data from all the Google forms was pooled in the MS Excel 2010 and then was analyzed.

## Observations:

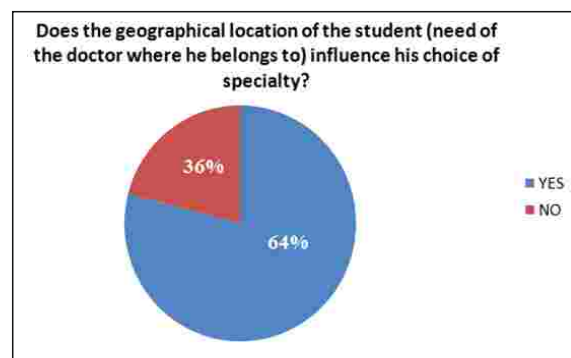
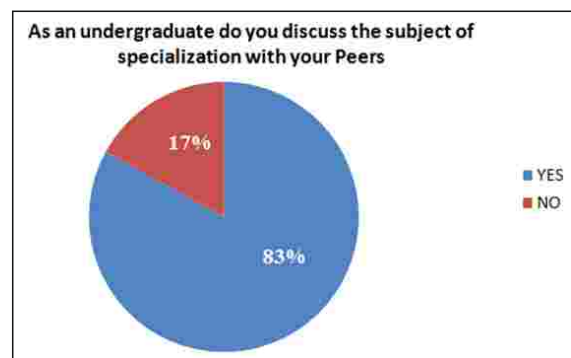
Table 1:

Age Group of Respondents		Sex of Respondents	
Less than 25 years	90%	Male	60%
More than 25 years	10%	Female	40%
Want to pursue post graduation?		What are the factors influencing choice of specialty?	
Yes	93%	Interest	62%
No	1%	Quality of life after completion	30%
Not yet decided	6%		
Would you go for career counseling for choice of specialty for post graduation?		Parental influence	5%
Yes	37%	Mentor influence	2%
No	28%	Others	1%
Not yet decided	35%		
Do you think that there is a clear demarcation between Male and Female medical students for choice of specialty?		Do you think that with time the demarcation between Male and Female medical students for choice of specialty is changing?	
Yes	33%	Yes	75%
No	67%	No	25%

The study being based in medical college most of the responders (90%) were less than 25 years of age with a male dominance of 60%. Majority (93%) of the students wanted to pursue post graduation after doing graduation. The main factor influencing choice of specialty was personal interest (62%) besides that other factors that students considered were Quality of life after completion (30%), Parental influence (5%), Mentor influence (2%). With regards to going for career

counseling for choice of specialty for post graduation the response was mixed with 37% students saying Yes, 28% students said they will not consult a career counselor, while 35% students were not sure or Not yet decided. With regards to a clear demarcation between Male and Female medical students for choice of specialty 33% students agreed that yes that speciality of choice is predecided with sex of the student while 67% did not think so. 75% students agreed that with time the demarcation between Male and Female medical students for choice of specialty is changing. Peer consulting was common (83%) amongst students to decide the speciality of choice. 64% of students believed that the geographical location of the students family (demand or requirement of doctors in the area of his home town) influence his or her choice of speciality.

**Figure 1**  
**Figure 2**



**Table 2**

There was a clear preference of braches of

What was your subject of choice during 1 <sup>st</sup> year of MBBS		During your MBBS course so far has your preference changed, if yes the choice has shifted to which subject	
Clinical Subjects	86%	Clinical Subjects	92%
Paraclinical Subjects	5%	Paraclinical Subjects	5%
Pre clinical subjects	10%	Pre clinical subjects	2%
Others (Hospital Administration / Civil services etc)	1%	Others (Hospital Administration / Civil services etc)	1%

Clinical Subjects as a choice for Post graduation with 86% students agreeing to it. 10% students were interested in Pre clinical subjects whereas 5% were interested in Paraclinical Subjects. Only 1% students were interested in other branches like Hospital Administration / Civil services etc

**Table 3:**

As an Undergraduate 34% students thought ENT

As an Undergraduate what do you think of ENT as a subject?				Would you select ENT as a carrier option for post graduation?	
Easy	34%	Could not understand	5%	Yes	52%
Tough	11%	Like other clinical subjects – No difference	50%	No	48%
Most important factors that encourage ENT as career includes			Reasons for not selecting ENT as a carrier option for post graduation?		
Variety of operative procedure	5%		Difficult subject		7%
Work life balance	2%		Less carrier options after doing it		9%
Both medical and surgical exposure	35%		Superspecialty not possible after doing post graduation		9%
Inherent interest in clinical area	1%		Financially not good		9%
Inspirational senior role models	5%		Difficult to settle after post graduation		10%
All of the above.	37%		Not applicable		56%
Not applicable	15%				

was an easy subject, although 50% thought that it was like other clinical subjects with no difference however 11% thought that it was a difficult subject. With regards to ENT as career option 52% students agreed that ENT is a good career option however 48% did not think so.

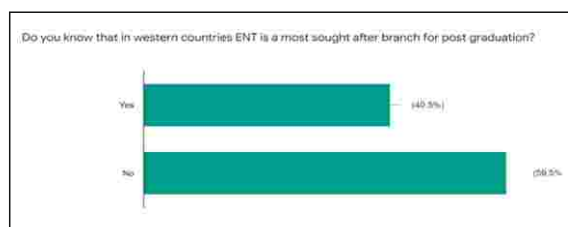
While responding to the most important factors that encourage then to take ENT as a career includes were: Variety of operative procedure 5%, Work life balance 2%, Both medical and surgical exposure 35%, Inherent interest in clinical area 1%, Inspirational senior role models 5%, All of the above 37%.

However reasons for not selecting ENT as a carrier option for post graduation the reasons

were Difficult subject 7%, Less carrier options after doing it 9% , Superspeciality not possible after doing post graduation 9%, Financially not good 9%, Difficult to settle after post graduation 10%,

About 60% students were not aware that ENT is a most sought after branch in western countries.

**Figure 4:**  
**Table 4**



Role of parents in deciding the career option was

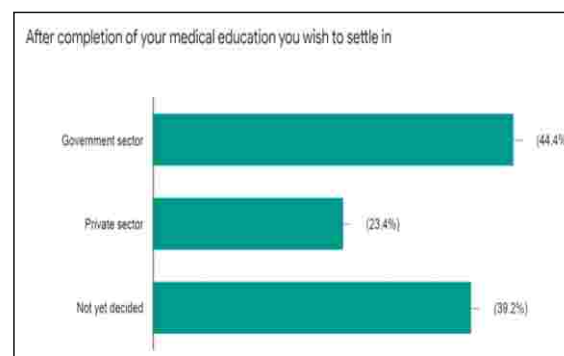
Will your parents influence your decision making for selecting specialty for post graduation?		My parents (one or both) are Medicos	
Yes	46%	Yes	17%
No	54%	No	83%
If your parents / relatives / acquaintance are doctors – does their specialty influence your decision making for selecting specialty for post graduation?		Do you think that age of the student at the time of selecting the specialty also influences the choice of specialty?	
Yes	40%	Yes	56%
No	60%	No	44%

mixed with 54% students agreeing not to and 46% students agreeing to consult parents in decision making for selecting specialty for post graduation.

Parents of 83% students were non medicos while only 17% students had a medico parents. While responding to the influence of your parents / relatives / acquaintance being doctors – does their specialty influence your decision making for selecting specialty for post graduation 60% students disagree with it while 40% students agreed to it. Age factor of the student at the time of selecting the specialty also influences the choice of specialty with 56% agreeing to it while 44% did not agree to it.

After completion of post graduation about 45% students wanted to do a Government Job, while 24% wanted to settle in the private sector however about 40% had not decided about the same

**Figure 5**  
**DISCUSSION**



In this study, we analyzed the preferences of Undergraduate medical students and interns for career specialties and the motivational factors influencing them with special emphasis on Otolaryngology. These factors are of importance to medical workforce planners especially in times of lack of postgraduates in the country.

In our study of 300 students majority (93%) had interest in Persuing post graduation and 83% of them had affinity for clinical subjects which is accordance with study conducted by Sreekar H et al 6.

Querido et al propose that factors influencing medical students' career choices can be grouped into 5 major categories: “(1) medical school characteristics (e.g., curriculum structure), (2) student characteristics (e.g., age, personality), (3) student values (e.g., personal preference), (4) career needs to be satisfying (e.g., expected income, status, work-life balance), and (5) perception of specialty characteristics (e.g., extracurricular or curricular experiences).”<sup>7</sup>

In our study the main factor influencing choice of specialty was personal interest (62%) besides that other factors that students considered were Quality of life after completion (30%), Parental influence (5%), Mentor influence (2%).

In a study done by Chawla J et al 8 more than 58% students opted for their chosen branches because of their keen interest in that subject. This was followed by 16% who chose their respective branches since they were well paying. Nearly 10%

students were inclined to their choice of specialty since they had been taught that subject exceptionally well while a small number opted for their branches thinking they were terminal branches and they would not have to pursue super specialty courses in them. 15% had not made up their mind till the time of study. In the study from Nigeria too, 91% (majority) of students chose their branch of specialization since they had a passion for it (Odusanya et al., 2000). In the study performed across five medical schools in Germany bright career prospects, economic stability and a flare for the subject were cardinal reasons why students chose a specific specialty (Götz et al., 2011).<sup>10</sup>

In our study majority (54%) agreed not to be influenced by parents for selecting a branch for post graduation.

Also out of students who had one or both the parent as medico (17%) majority of them (60%) disagreed to be influenced by their parents specialty. This is similar to study done by Gour N et al of 180 undergraduate students.

## CONCLUSION

The factors involved in career-related decision-making are mostly context-specific. One of the reasons for this is that models of medical education and selection into specialty programs vary globally. Surveys done abroad have found ENT to be amongst the top-five most preferred fields of medical students but not so in India. Multiple recent survey suggest a non-preference for ENT amongst students, most students value the following as pros & cons for choosing ENT as a branch Pros of MS (ENT): End branch (finally you will be a surgeon) / Super-speciality options (head-neck surgery, plastic surgery, Oncosurgery, and multiple fellowships) / Easy to get (less competitive). Cons of MS (ENT): Highly saturated / Cross specialty competition with MD (medicine), MS (general surgery) and MDS (OFMS) / Limited job opportunities/ less salary. We thus conclude that the most meritorious medical graduates in India do not choose ENT as a branch for post graduation, unlike developed nations and

the association must take steps to improve the situation

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