
GYNECOLOGY

Attitude of Third-Year Internships in Thailand: To be or not to be in Obstetrics and Gynecology Residency Training ?

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ABSTRACT

Objective: To determine the opinion to pursue the residency training in Obstetrics and Gynecology of third-year internships who work in Thailand.

Materials and methods: This is a cross-sectional descriptive study. Questionnaires consisted of demographic question, questions about desire and factors influencing their selection for residency training in Obstetrics and Gynecology and other fields were sent to all third-year internships in Thailand.

Results: Eight hundred and seventy six third-year internships (57.8% of all third-year internships) completed the questionnaires. Only 69 respondents (8.4%) chose Obstetrics and Gynecology residency training. Positive factors influencing their decisions included the chance of practicing surgical procedure, the enhancing the ability of taking care pregnant women and child birth and good impression of the instructors. On the contrary, negative factors included high risk of litigation and serious complications, unusual life-style of obstetrician had poor impact on the internship selection of specialty.

Conclusions: Only 8.4% of third-year internships decided to pursue residency training in Obstetrics and Gynecology. The risk of law suits and life-style issues might detract them from pursuing Obstetrics and Gynecology residency training.

Key words: attitude, third-year internship, obstetrics and gynecology residency training

It is widely accepted that Obstetrician and Gynecologist carried significant risks of being the victims of law suit. In 1981, 17.37% of the physicians who worked at the rural hospital were interested in Obstetrics and Gynecology.⁽¹⁾ Nowadays, there has been declining in numbers.⁽²⁻⁴⁾ Higher proportion of female doctors were interested in taking specialties and sub-specialties than male doctors, especially

in Obstetrics and Gynecology.⁽⁵⁾ There have been researches on postgraduates career choice in Obstetrics and Gynecology in the United State of America, but none from Thailand.

The purpose of this study was to explore the reasons of pursuing the residency training in Obstetrics and Gynecology of third-year internships in Thailand.

Materials and Methods

The study design was a cross-sectional descriptive study. The study protocol number ID 02-50-13 was approved on April 3, 2007 by the Ethical Clearance Committee on Human Rights Related to Researches Involving Human Subjects, Faculty of Medicine Ramathibodi Hospital, Mahidol University. The list of all third-year internships who graduated in 2005, total 1,515, was gathered from The Medical Council of Thailand. The questionnaires were sent to all of them in May 2007 and were collected in August 2007.

The questionnaires mentioned above consisted of the following items: 1) demographic characteristics 2) the decision whether to enter residency training in OB-GYN 3) reasons behind the decision, focusing on physician gender, surgical procedure, taking care of pregnant patient and child birth, potential of complications, potential of litigation, their own daily life-style effect, physician gender, institute residency training program and impression on instructors and colleagues.

The computer software package, EpiData and SPSS version 11 were used for data analysis. Descriptive analysis and basic statistic were applied on the obtaining data.

Results

Questionnaires were sent to all 1,515 third-year internships, 889 (58.67%) were responded. 876 (57.82%) who had completed data were recruited for

analysis, 535 females (61.1%) and 341 males (38.9%). Demographic data were presented in Table 1.

Based on responded data, decision on applying clinical specialties was increased from 748 respondents (85.4%) in 6th year medical student (extern) to 826 respondents (94.3%) in third-year internships. During practicing externships, 85 respondents (10.8%) desired further training in Obstetrics and Gynecology but only 69 respondents (8.4%) were insistence. Numbers of respondents increased in Medicine and other minor specialties but decreased in Pediatrics and Obstetrics and Gynecology (Fig. 1).

517 female (62.6%) and 309 male (37.4%) internships desired to continue education by residency training (n=826). More female doctors professed residency training in Pediatrics and other minor specialties, however the numbers of male doctors were more prominent in Medicine, Surgery and Orthopedics. An equal proportion of female (8.5%) and male (8.1%) interested in Obstetrics and Gynecology (Fig. 2). Factors effecting their decision to apply for Obstetrics and Gynecology residency training included the chance of improving surgical skills (71.01%), to gain experience in taking care of pregnant patients and childbirth (50.72%) and the influence from instructors (42.03%) (Table 2). On the contrary, potential of litigation (80.98%), potential of serious complications (68.29%) and affected their own daily life-style (38.31%) detracted them from choosing Obstetrics and Gynecology specialist as a career.

Table 1. Demographic data of Third-year internship completed the questionnaire.

Characteristics	Number (N=876)	Percentage (%)
Sex		
Female	535	61.1
Male	341	38.9
Marital status		
Single	835	95.3
Married	40	4.6
Divorced	1	0.1
Mean age \pm SD (year)	26.01 \pm 1.10	

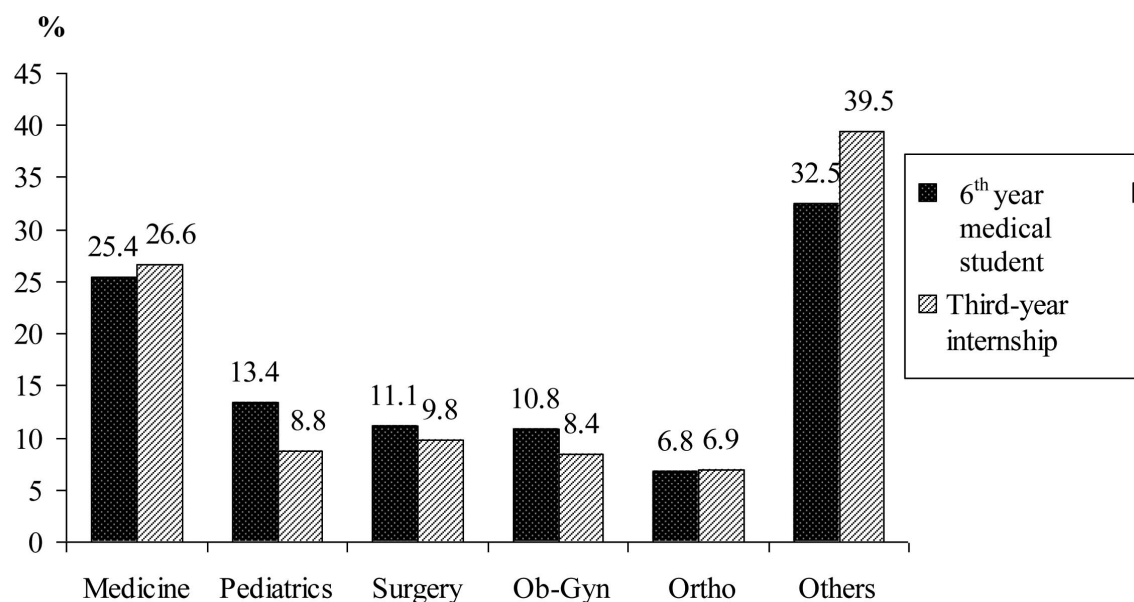


Fig. 1. Specialties choosing amongst 6th year medical student and third –year internship.

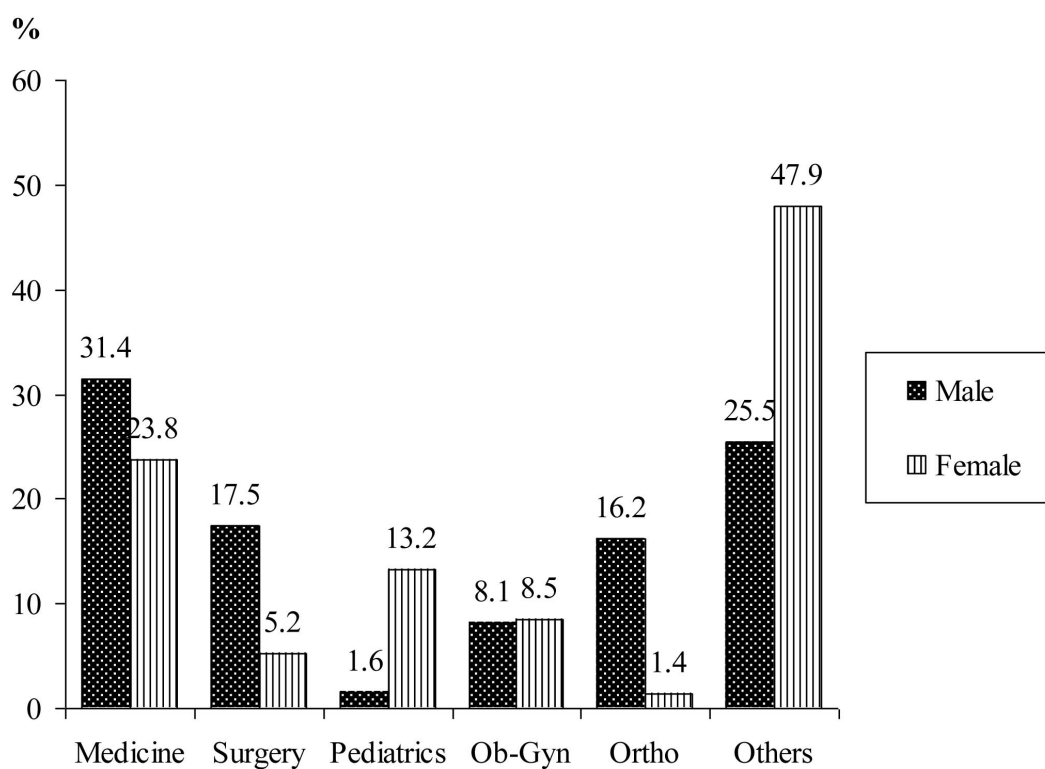


Fig. 2. Specialty chose for residency training, by gender

Table 2. Factors that influencing decision to pursue Obstetrics and Gynecology residency training

Factors	Percentage N=69
1. Chance of practicing surgical procedure	71.01
2. Taking care of pregnant patients and child birth	50.72
3. Good impression of instructors	42.03
4. Direct contact with patient	33.33
5. Education program	33.33

Table 3. Factors that influencing decision not to pursue Obstetrics and Gynecology residency training

Factors	Percentage N=757
1. High risk of litigation	80.98
2. Serious complications	68.29
3. Daily life-style effect	38.31
4. Chance of practicing surgical procedure	33.03
5. Focusing on one system	31.70

Discussion

This is a cross-sectional descriptive study on factors influencing third-year internships decision to enter Obstetrics and Gynecology residency training. Limited by low responded rate (58.67%), only 7.88% of third-year internships chose Obstetrics and Gynecology training comparing with 17.37% in 1981⁽¹⁾.

The opportunity to perform surgery and working closely with patients were the biggest attractors but life-style issues and the risk of law suit were the most important detractors that considering Obstetrics and Gynecology as a favored specialty. This is similar to the study of Metheny WP and co in 1991.⁽⁶⁾

In 2003, Fogaty CA and co surveyed of previous ten years graduates from one Midwest Medical School, found that factors influence choice of Obstetrics and Gynecology as a specialty were gender, second-year rotation, staff, continuity of patient care, primary care opportunities, surgical opportunities, female patients, life-style and financial.⁽⁷⁾ Although this present study found surgical opportunities and relations with staff were important to applicants to apply Obstetrics and

Gynecology residency training.

Schnuth RL et al studied in 205 medical students to identify factors that influence medical students to choose of Obstetrics and Gynecology residency training, found that staffs play an important role to encourage graduates to pursue Obstetrics and Gynecology as a career specialty.⁽⁸⁾ In 2006, Sanoaseang N, Boriboonhiransarn D had publish in J. Med Ass. Thai, the need for surgical skills, learning system and experiences in the Department, interaction with residents and staffs were positive factors influencing medical students decision to chose Obstetrics and Gynecology. Negative factors including life-style issues and practice trend especially about potential for a malpractice and litigation are identified.⁽⁹⁾ In comparison, with this study, the interaction with residents had no influence.

The increasing number of law suit and less satisfaction of Obstetricians and Gynecologists cause the declination of number of applicants for Obstetrics and Gynecology residents. To prevent the potential of lawsuit, strictly evidence based standard of care

should be practiced. To promote positive feedback, it is important for Obstetrics and Gynecology practitioners to encourage medical students and graduates to enter the profession. We suggest to improve the surgical skill and clinical skill during training period and augment to cooperate clinical practice or group practice in Obstetricians and Gynecologists. Some additional studies to identify factors that influence maintenance or improvement in Obstetrics and Gynecology residency training recruitment in the future are recommended.

We do hope that, this study may help directive toward national attention drawn to this situation, focus recruitment into the specialty and promoting the positive aspects of the field.

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ทัศนคติของแพทย์ใช้ทุนปีที่สามในประเทศไทยต่อการฝึกอบรมเป็นแพทย์ประจำบ้านสาขาสูติศาสตร์-นรีเวชวิทยา

ยุพดี โตขาว, อภิชาติ จิตต์เจริญ

วัตถุประสงค์ : เพื่อศึกษาความต้องการฝึกอบรมเป็นแพทย์ประจำบ้าน สาขาสูติศาสตร์-นรีเวชวิทยา ของแพทย์ใช้ทุนปีที่ 3 ซึ่งปฏิบัติงานอยู่ในประเทศไทย

วัสดุและวิธีการ : เป็นการวิจัยเชิงพรรณนาแบบตัดขวาง แพทย์ใช้ทุนปีที่ 3 ที่ปฏิบัติงานอยู่ในประเทศไทยทุกคนจะได้รับแบบสอบถามซึ่งประกอบด้วย ข้อมูลทั่วไป การตัดสินใจเลือกฝึกอบรมเฉพาะทางและคำถามเกี่ยวกับเหตุผลในการเลือกหรือไม่เลือกฝึกอบรมในสาขาสูติศาสตร์-นรีเวชวิทยา

ผลการศึกษา : แพทย์ใช้ทุนปีที่ 3 ตอบแบบสอบถามสมบูรณ์จำนวน 876 คน (57.8%) มีเพียง 69 คน (8.4%) เลือกฝึกอบรมเป็นแพทย์ประจำบ้านสาขาสูติศาสตร์-นรีเวชวิทยา ปัจจัยที่มีผลต่อการเลือกคือ เป็นสาขาที่ใช้ทักษะในการผ่าตัด ได้ดูแลการตั้งครรภ์และการให้กำเนิดบุตร และประทับใจอาจารย์ที่สอน ปัจจัยที่มีผลต่อการไม่เลือกคือ เป็นสาขาที่เสี่ยงต่อการฟ้องร้อง ภาวะแทรกซ้อน และรบกวนการใช้ชีวิตประจำวัน

สรุป : แพทย์ใช้ทุนปีที่ 3 เลือกฝึกอบรมเป็นแพทย์ประจำบ้านสาขาสูติศาสตร์-นรีเวชวิทยา 8.4% ความเสี่ยงต่อการฟ้องร้องและรบกวนการใช้ชีวิตประจำวัน น่าจะเป็นปัจจัยที่มีผลต่อการไม่เลือกฝึกอบรมเป็นแพทย์ประจำบ้านสาขาสูติศาสตร์-นรีเวชวิทยา
