

Neurosurgery resident migration patterns: Did changes in ABNS eligibility affect Canadian neurosurgery resident education and employment opportunities?

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Introduction

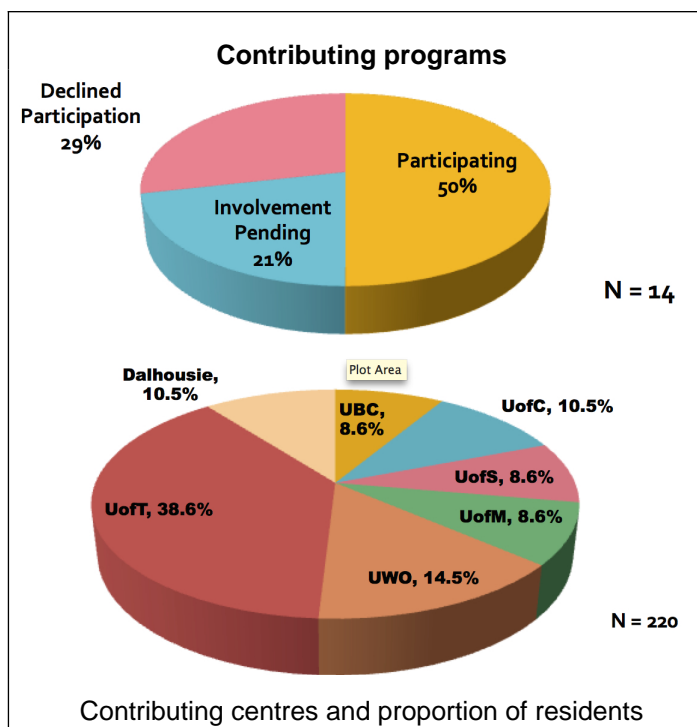
The American Board of Neurological Surgery (ABNS) is the body awarding certification of competency in neurological surgery in the USA. While it does not define practice privilege, recognition is necessitated by many institutions. Application was open to residents entering Canadian programs prior to 1997; however has since been only available to Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) recognized programs, excluding Canadian schools. This study asks whether this change has affected education and employment opportunities for graduating neurosurgeons.

Methods

All neurosurgical residency programs in Canada were invited to participate. Programs were asked to provide lists of graduates from 2012 to 1984. Graduates were sorted by year of graduation into pre or post 2003 (ie. 6 years after 1997) and further training and employment information, if not provided, was gathered from public domain resources.

Results

50% of programs participated in this study for 220 graduating residents. There was no difference in proportion of American fellowships obtained relative to graduation date. The proportion of American consultant positions declined from 36.4% to 28% after 2003. This difference was statistically significant. Overall proportions of residents obtaining any fellowship or consultancy position did not change.



Characteristics of Graduating residents	
Number of programs involved	7
Range of graduation dates	(1984 – 2012)
Total number of residents	220
Number of graduates graduating prior to 2003	118 ←
Number of graduates graduating after 2003	102 ←
Graduates of Canadian Medical School (CMG)	177
Graduates of International Medical Schools (IMG)	43

Comparison in American Fellowship and Consultancy positions filled by Canadians

Proportion of fellowships completed in US (pre 2003)	Proportion of fellowships completed in US (post 2003)	P value
47.4 %	47.1 %	0.18
Proportion of consultant positions in US (pre 2003)	Proportion of consultant positions in US (post 2003)	P value
36.4 %	28.0%	2.4 x 10 ⁻⁵

Comparison of residents graduating prior to and after ABNS eligibility lost

Conclusions

Changes in ABNS eligibility did not obviously affect the proportion of American fellowships while consultancy positions did decrease. The aetiology may be multifactorial, including coinciding evolving economics and hiring trends. Overall proportions of residents finding employment or fellowships were not affected. Future study may delineate the other factors that influence migration and assist future residency planning.

Learning Objectives

At the end of the session, participants should be able to 1) identify trends that have occurred over time in Canadian neurosurgical post graduate training and employment; 2) discuss the potential impact that ABNS eligibility changes has had on Canadian graduates seeking employment or further education in the USA; 3) comment on the implications that changing qualifications for board eligibility may have on individuals seeking employment or education in the USA.