

Understanding Perceived Barriers to a Career in Obstetrics and Gynaecology amongst Medical Students: A cross-sectional study

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Aim: Obstetrics & Gynaecology is a high stress but rewarding specialty that has seen dwindling application rates. Only 58% of trainee posts were filled within Northern Ireland in 2022. With a 30% attrition rate within the specialty and a new trend towards the “F3 Year” numbers entering the specialty and remaining are at an all time low.

Our study aims to understand the factors attracting and deterring students from considering a career in Obstetrics & Gynaecology.

Methods: A study population of 317 medical within Queen’s University was identified. Using Google forms a 14-question survey was designed to assess population demographics and factors contributing to career choice. Responses were anonymised.

Following collection of responses, data was analysed using a qualitative approach to formulate a percentage-based outcome of the data set.

Results: 216 out of 317 students responded to the survey with a response rate of 68%

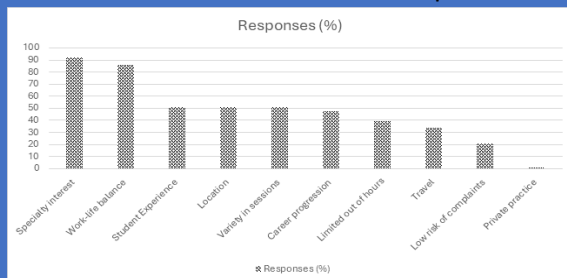


Figure 1: Factors affecting Career Choice

	Response numbers	% of respondent
1 Mix of medicine and surgery	73	39.7
2 Gynaecology care	21	11.4
3 Positive senior role models within the specialty	16	8.7
4 Develop surgical skills	15	8.2
5 Labour ward experience	14	7.6
6 Antenatal care	13	7.1
7 Opportunity for travel	8	4.3
8 Opportunity for research	2	1.1

Table 1: Pull Factors towards choosing O&G

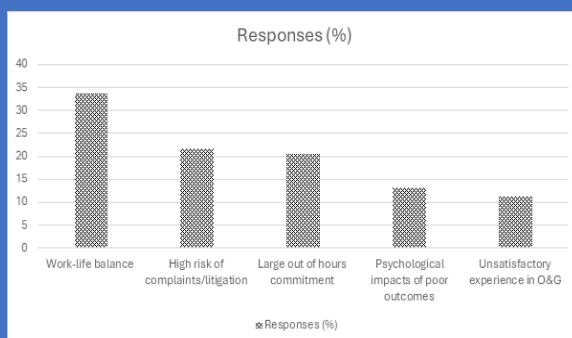


Figure 2: Factors discouraging choosing O&G

Intervention	Number of responses	% of respondents supporting intervention
Dedicated doctor, acting as a point of contact for audit / QI etc	161	74.5%
Video testimonials from doctors within the specialty	97	44.9%
Online resources	94	43.9%
Careers events	105	48.6%
Educational events, detailing expected entry criteria for applications to specialty training	1	0.5%

Table 2: Interventions to improve student education

Conclusion: It is clear that Obstetrics and Gynaecology is still a sought after specialty however we need to be mindful of the changing landscape of medical careers. There are strategies that can be implemented to boost the uptake and retention of Doctors entering this specialty. Future planning needs to account for work-life balance in protecting our future clinicians.