

General surgery

General surgery was once the gateway into a career in surgery. Over time, surgical subspecialties developed separate residency programs, and recently, integrated programs have emerged. It is unknown what impact the presence of surgical subspecialties and integrated programs have had on general surgery. Our objective was to evaluate match trends and quantify competitiveness of the general surgery, integrated programs, and surgical subspecialties matches.

Methods: National Residency Matching Program match data and applicant characteristics from 2010 through 2020 were analyzed for US senior allopathic applicants. Integrated programs were defined as plastic and vascular surgery, and surgical subspecialties were defined as otolaryngology, orthopedic surgery, and neurosurgery. Trends were evaluated using linear regression, programs were compared on 10 metrics by Wilcoxon rank-sum tests, and a logistic regression was used to rank each specialty match.

Results: The number of US senior applicants per position to integrated programs decreased and approached that of general surgery and surgical subspecialties, but the median number of applicants per position to general surgery was lower than to surgical subspecialties or integrated programs (1.21 interquartile range). Our logistic regression showed United States Medical Licensing Examination scores, research experience, Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Society membership, and graduation from a top medical school to be the most important factors in the match, and our weighted rank score found general surgery (2.85) to be less competitive than surgical subspecialties (1.92) or integrated programs (1.17).

Conclusion: Throughout the last decade, integrated programs and surgical subspecialties have matched more competitive applicants based on the most significant predictors of the match. Moving forward, it is important that general surgery strives to attract the best and brightest out of medical school ¹⁾.

¹⁾

Vaysburg DM, Cortez AR, Hanseman DJ, Delman AM, Morris C, Kassam AF, Kutz D, Lewis J, Van Haren RM, Quillin RC 3rd. An analysis of applicant competitiveness to general surgery, surgical subspecialties, and integrated programs. *Surgery*. 2021 Apr 17:S0039-6060(21)00232-4. doi: 10.1016/j.surg.2021.03.035. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 33879334.

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