

# Vanderbilt University Medical Center

[Vanderbilt University Medical Center Nashville, Tennessee.](#)

Vanderbilt and the Department of Neurological Surgery have a long tradition of providing internationally acclaimed patient care, life changing innovations and research and training.

VUMC consistently ranks in the 100 Best Hospitals survey and annually our medical and surgical specialties rank as best or high performing while our pediatric neurosurgery program is ranked 15th in the nation according to US News and World Report.

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Misrepresentation of scholarly achievements is a recognized phenomenon, well documented in numerous fields, yet the accuracy of reporting remains dependent on the honor principle. Therefore, honest self-reporting is of paramount importance to maintain scientific integrity in neurosurgery. Kistka et al., had observed a trend toward increasing numbers of [publications](#) among applicants for neurosurgery residency at Vanderbilt University and undertook this study to determine whether this change was a result of increased academic productivity, inflated reporting, or both. They also aimed to identify application variables associated with inaccurate citations.

The authors retrospectively reviewed the residency applications submitted to their neurosurgery department in 2006 (n = 148) and 2012 (n = 194). The applications from 2006 were made via SF Match and those from 2012 were made using the Electronic Residency Application Service. Publications reported as "accepted" or "in press" were verified via online search of [Google Scholar](#), [PubMed](#), journal websites, and direct journal contact. Works were considered misrepresented if they did not exist, incorrectly listed the applicant as first author, or were incorrectly listed as peer reviewed or published in a printed journal rather than an online only or non-peer-reviewed publication. Demographic data were collected, including applicant sex, medical school ranking and country, advanced degrees, Alpha Omega Alpha membership, and USMLE Step 1 score. Zero-inflated negative binomial regression was used to identify predictors of misrepresentation.

Using univariate analysis, between 2006 and 2012 the percentage of applicants reporting published works increased significantly (47% vs 97%,  $p < 0.001$ ). However, the percentage of applicants with misrepresentations (33% vs 45%) also increased. In 2012, applicants with a greater total of reported works ( $p < 0.001$ ) and applicants from unranked US medical schools (those not ranked by US News & World Report) were more likely to have erroneous citations ( $p = 0.038$ ).

The incidence of legitimate and misrepresented scholarly works reported by applicants to the authors' neurosurgery residency program increased during the past 6 years. Misrepresentation is more common in applicants from unranked US medical schools and those with a greater number of reported works on their application. This trend is concerning in a profession where trustworthiness is vital. To preserve integrity in the field, programs should consider verifying citations prior to submitting their rank lists <sup>1)</sup>.

## Publications

see [Vanderbilt University Medical Center publications.](#)

1)

Kistka HM, Nayeri A, Wang L, Dow J, Chandrasekhar R, Chambless LB. Publication misrepresentation among neurosurgery residency applicants: an increasing problem. J Neurosurg. 2016 Jan;124(1):193-8. doi: 10.3171/2014.12.JNS141990. PubMed PMID: 26207605.

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