

The Mid-Training Slump: Changes in Competitive Specialty Interest at Jacobs School of Medicine

Srishti Arora, Sarah Ghadersohi, Gianna Minnuto, Isabella Kujawinski, Tanya Biscardi MS



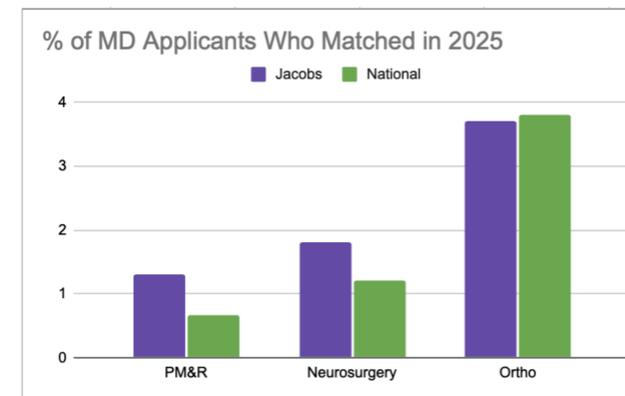
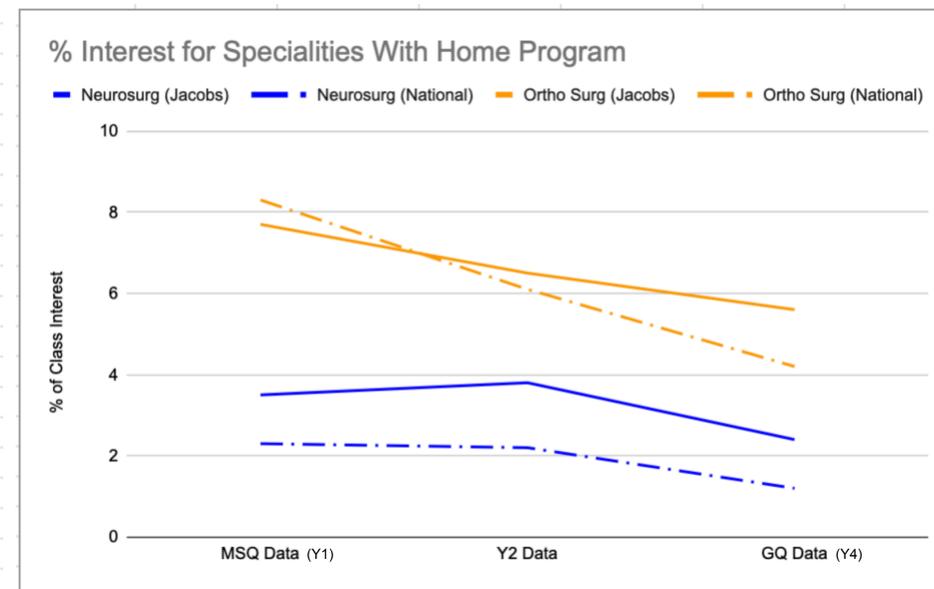
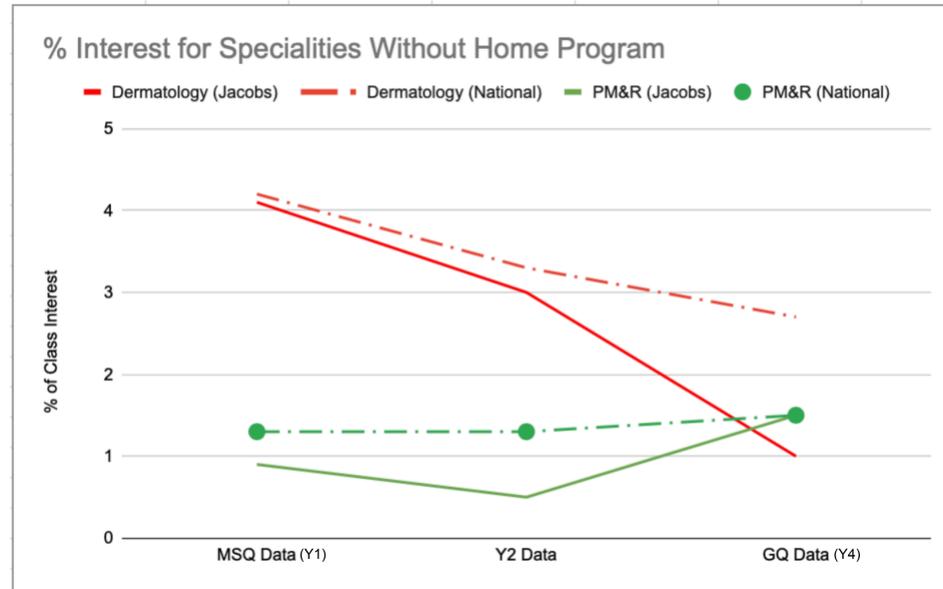
Background

- Sustaining interest in competitive specialties depends on exposure, mentorship, and advising, often provided through home residency programs.
- **How the absence of a home residency program affects specialty interest persistence is not well characterized at the institutional level, including at SUNY Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences.**

Methods

- Aggregated AAMC survey data from **SUNY Jacobs** students (2017–2025) were analyzed.
- Specialty interest was assessed at matriculation (MSQ), mid-training (Y2), and graduation (GQ).
- Competitive specialties were grouped by presence or absence of a home residency program and compared with national averages using a repeated cross-sectional approach.

Results



Supplementary context (categorical specialties only)

- Interest divergence between SUNY Jacobs and national trends emerges **mid-training** and is most pronounced for competitive specialties without home residency programs.
- Dermatology interest at SUNY Jacobs began at a level **comparable** to national averages but declined more sharply over training, with the greatest divergence observed by graduation.
- Neurosurgery demonstrated consistently **higher interest** at SUNY Jacobs than national averages across all stages of training.
- Across all specialties, a general decline in interest was observed from matriculation to graduation.
- For categorical specialties, **match outcomes** at SUNY Jacobs were comparable to or slightly higher than national averages. PM&R and Neurosurgery demonstrated modestly higher match representation at SUNY Jacobs compared with national trends, while Orthopaedic Surgery match rates were similar.

Discussion

- Specialty interest persistence differed by the presence of a home residency program, with the greatest divergence observed mid-medical school.
- Sustained interest in Neurosurgery and Orthopedics despite high competitiveness suggests institutional exposure may mitigate perceived barriers.
- Findings are limited to a single institution and reflect cohort-level trends; individual, demographic, and structural factors were not assessed.
- Future work should examine mechanisms underlying interest change, including mentorship access, research opportunities, and financial barriers.

References

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