



VANDERBILT
HEALTH

Perceptions of Research Fellowships for Otolaryngology Residency Applicants: A Survey of Program Directors

Alexander J. Barna, MPH¹, Serena Pu, MD², Priyesh N. Patel, MD¹, Marita S. Teng, MD², Diana N. Kirke, MD, MPhil², Shiayin F. Yang, MD¹

1. Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Nashville, TN.

2. Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, New York, NY.

Icahn
School of
Medicine at
Mount
Sinai



Overall, 72% of respondents recognized downsides to completing a research fellowship and typically recommend that 15% of their students should complete these programs.

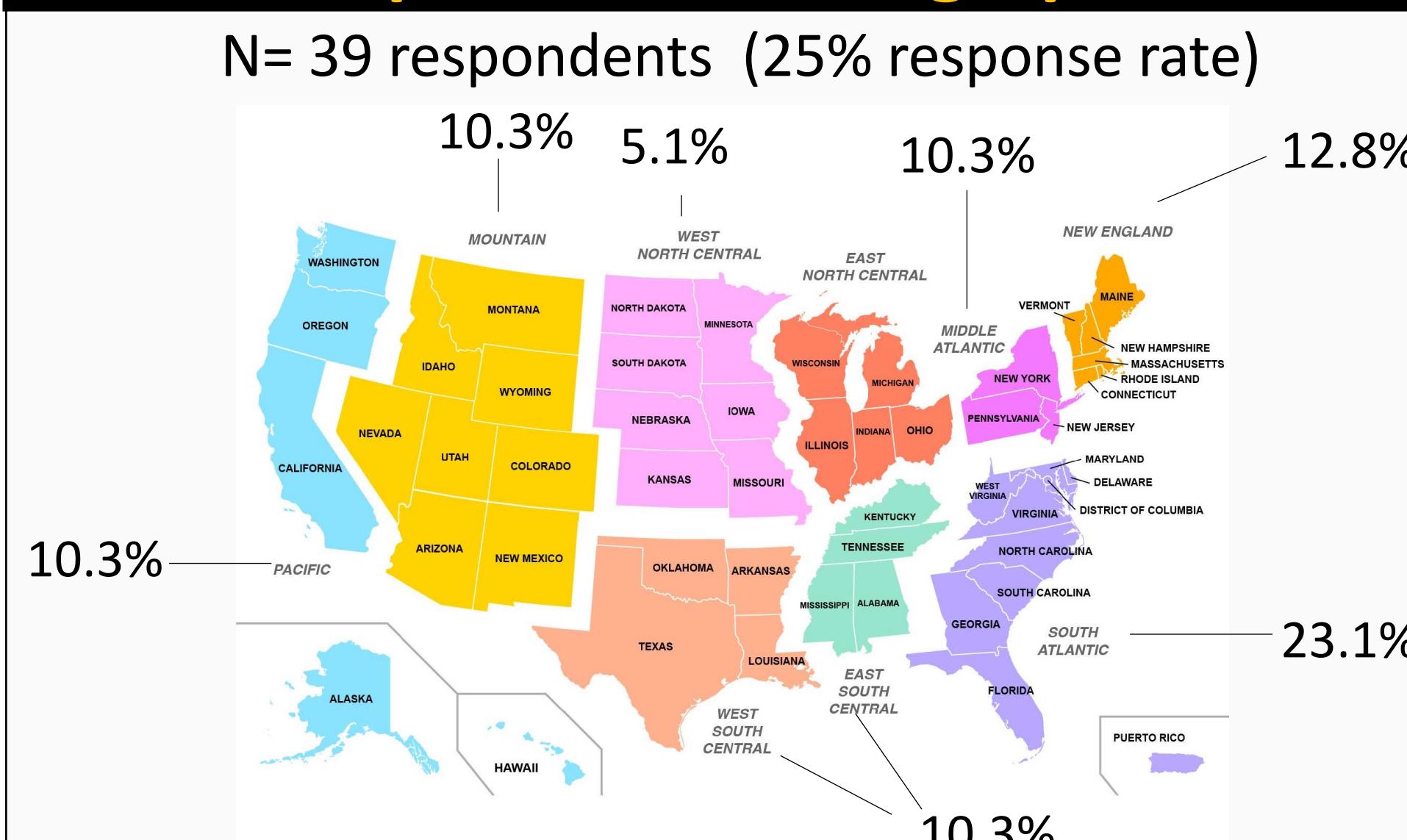
Introduction

- The Otolaryngology match rate is one of the most competitive specialties in the NRMP match.
- Average ENT match is ~75% per year.
- There is an increasing trend in the total # of research products for matched applicants.
- The purpose of this study is to understand program directors' opinions of how they view fellowships regarding applicant's competitiveness.

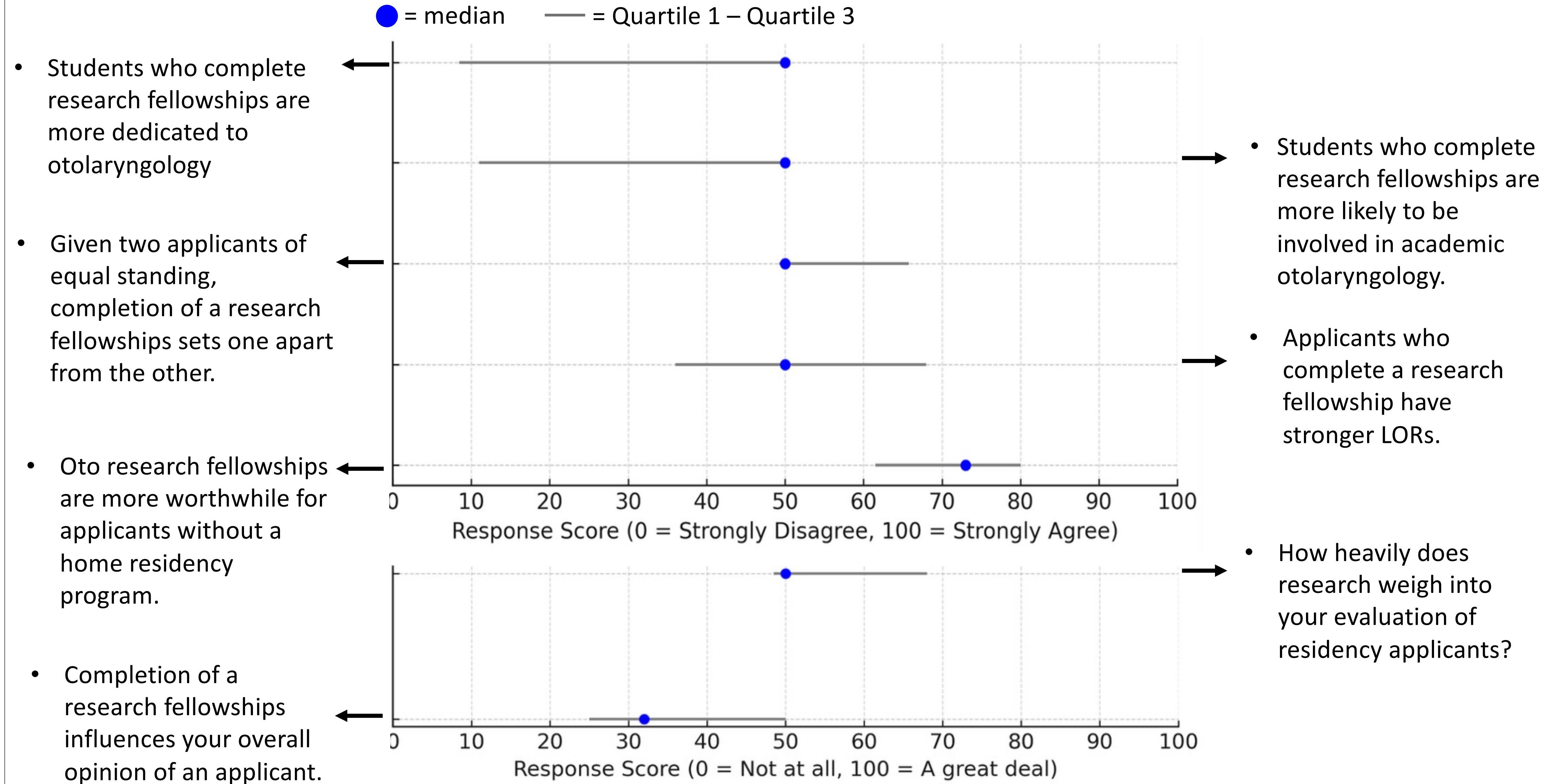
Methods and Materials

- Study Design:** Cross-Sectional Survey to program directors and assistant program directors of accredited Otolaryngology residency programs in the U.S.
- Outcomes:** Multiple choice, Likert-scale (0-100), short answer, and free response questions regarding opinions of research fellowships.
- Analysis:** Descriptive statistics, qualitative analysis of free responses.

Respondent Demographics



Results



Qualitative Analysis

2 Positive Comments

• "It is a great opportunity only if one takes it because they want to do the research or don't have a home program..."

N = 13 free responses

3 Mixed Comments

• "... many students are completing research fellowships for all of the wrong reasons. Students that take the time off to do this should have a genuine interest in research and understand the risks of taking time away to do this..."

• "...another "gap year" only adds more delay, more debt, and adds time before they can start earning and saving money. For this reason, research years heavily favor those students who can afford to make the decision which deepens some of the cultural divide within our specialty..."

Discussion

- Overall, perceptions and opinions of medical student research fellowships were mixed.
- Fellowships may provide benefits for those who truly want to pursue an academic career or for those without a home residency program.
- However, they may carry downsides if only completed to increase residency competitiveness especially if applicants are less productive than anticipated.

References

- Boyi T, Benjamin WI, Lenze NR, et al. Association of Medical School Gap Year Research and Degree Programs With Otolaryngology Interview and Match Outcomes. *Ann Otol Rhinol Laryngol*. 2024;133(9):783-791. doi:10.1177/00034894241261821
- Dorsmond C, Shah RN, Ebert CS Jr, Buckmire RA. Impact of Medical Student Research Fellowships on Otolaryngology Match Outcomes. *Laryngoscope*. 2021;131(9):E2506-E2512. doi:10.1002/lary.29521
- Cotter EJ, Polce EM, Williams KT, Spiker AM, Grogan BF, Lang GJ. Current State of Research Gap-Years in Orthopedic Surgery Residency Applicants: Program Directors' Perspectives. *Iowa Orthop J*. 2022;42(1):19-30.
- Wright-Chisem J, Cohn MR, Yang J, Osei D, Kogan M. Do Medical Students Who Participate in a Research Gap Year Produce More Research During Residency? *J Am Acad Orthop Surg Glob Res Rev*. 2021;5(5):e21.00061. Published 2021 May 13. doi:10.5435/AAOSGlobal-D-21-00061
- Clark SC, Brown SM, Mulcahey MK. Gap Year Research Fellowship Opportunities for Medical Students Interested in Orthopaedic Surgery. *J Am Acad Orthop Surg Glob Res Rev*. 2021;5(12):e21.00153. Published 2021 Dec 22. doi:10.5435/AAOSGlobal-D-21-00153
- Hug S, Kortz MW, Johnson JN. Medical Student Research Fellowships in Neurosurgery: A Primer for Applicants and Mentors. *World Neurosurg*. 2021;154:39-43. doi:10.1016/j.wneu.2021.07.076
- Costello CM, Harvey JA, Besch-Stokes JG, et al. The role research gap years play in a successful dermatology match. *Int J Dermatol*. 2022;61(2):226-230. doi:10.1111/ijd.15964

Contact

Alexander J. Barna, MPH
Vanderbilt University Medical Center
719 Thompson Lane, Suite 30400
Nashville, TN 37204
ajb487@Drexel.edu