

Making Good Career Decisions

January 11, 2018

Guiding Questions

- What stage of decision-making am I in?
- What is the timeline for this process?
- How do students decide on specialties?
- What type of decision-maker am I?
- What tools exist to help?
- What are some additional resources?

Advising Case Study 1

James is more than halfway through his 3rd year, and none of the specialties have excited (or dissuaded) him.

Is there a specialty that is right for him, and how does he find it?

Decision Stage?





Determining The Right Fit

- Generalist vs. specialist
- Specific patient populations, diseases, or systems
- Hospital-based vs. ambulatory
- Academic vs. community vs. hybrid
- Continuous vs. episodic care
- Direct patient contact vs. Indirect patient contact
- Technical skills vs. cognitive skills
- Variety vs. consistency
- High acuity vs. low acuity
- Lifestyle

CiM Timeline

M3

- Begin clinical rotations; record your reflections on the  [Clinical Rotation Evaluation](#) 
- Review [competitiveness data](#) to assess your qualifications
- Join appropriate specialty associations and organizations

Choose a Specialty

- Meet with your advisor to discuss your top specialty preferences
- Complete the [Specialty Indecision Scale](#) if you're having difficulty making a specialty decision
- Request [letters of recommendation](#) from faculty in your chosen specialty(ies)

Decision Deadline?

End of 3rd year: narrow down specialties

June/July of 4th year: good goal to finalize decision

Some students decide later in summer

Early 4th year: important time for experience

How Do You Make Decisions?

Logical

Intuitive

Hesitant

Idea Testing

Talking

How Do I Make Decisions?

Logical

Intuitive

Hesitant

Idea Testing

Talking

Impulsive

Fatalistic

Compliant

Delaying

Paralytic

Advising Case Study 2

Amanda is a 3rd year student contemplating the specialty selection process.

She asks about some common mistakes she should avoid.



- Early specialty exposure
- Unwavering commitment
- Focused activities
- No second choice consideration

Premature Closure





Premature Closure

Pros:

- Deep knowledge/insight about speci
- May have the right personality traits
- Ease of scheduling/fewer distraction



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- May have the right personality traits
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Cons:

- People change!
- May lack self-awareness
- May focus on the wrong reasons
- Inaccurate perceptions
- Lack of information
- Limited discovery/immersion

Avoiding Premature Closure

- Allow your experiences to matter
- Actively evaluate how you feel about clerkships
 - (hint: Clinical Rotation Evaluation form)
- If you are pretty certain, be realistic about your competitiveness

- List maker
- Organized
- Perfectionistic
- Compulsive
- Seeking the right answer...

But deeply
conflicted about
specialty



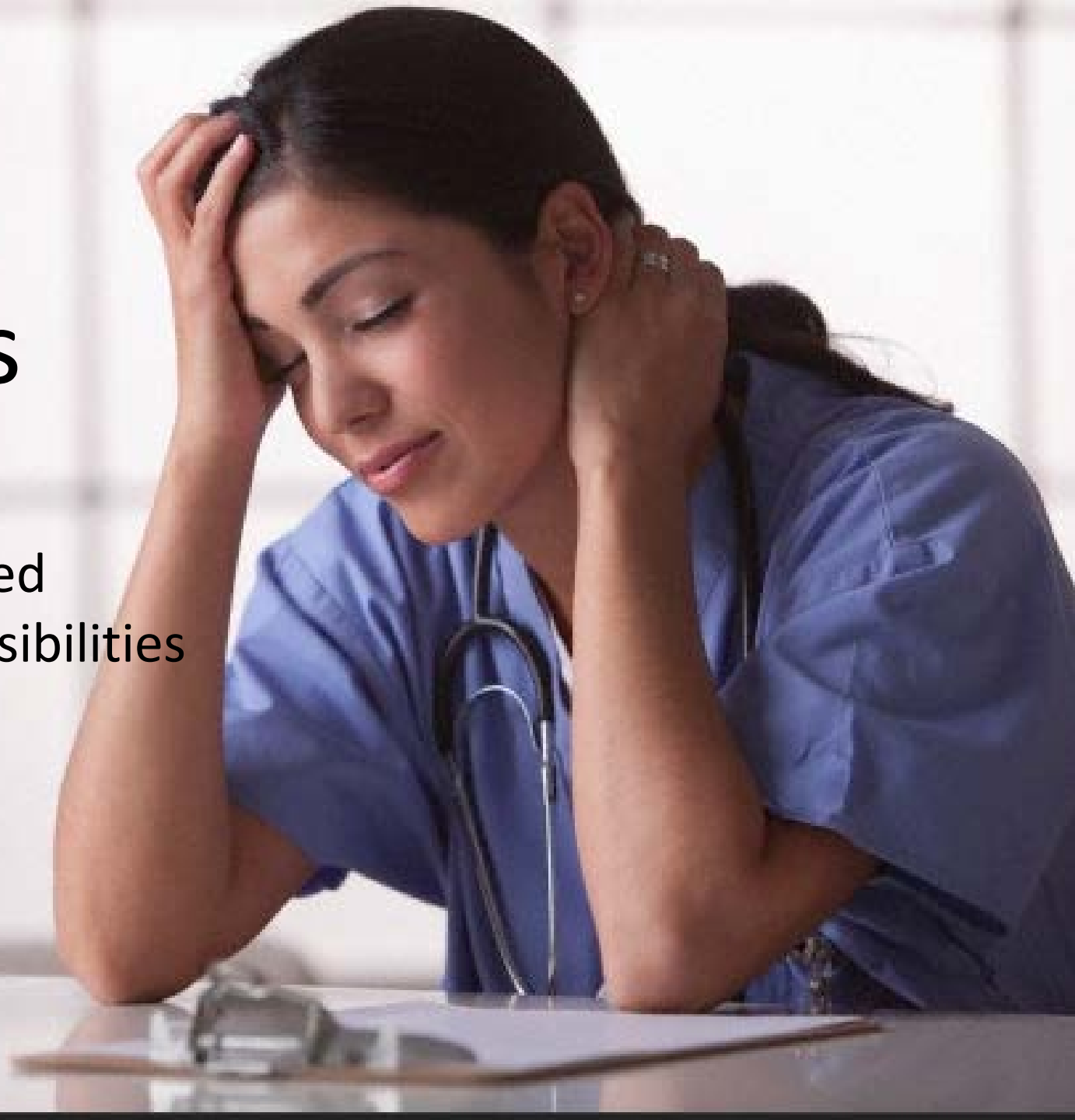
Analysis Paralysis



Analysis Paralysis

Pros:

- Well-informed
- Open to possibilities



Analysis Paralysis

Cons:

- High Anxiety
- Overwhelmed
- Unidentified Barriers

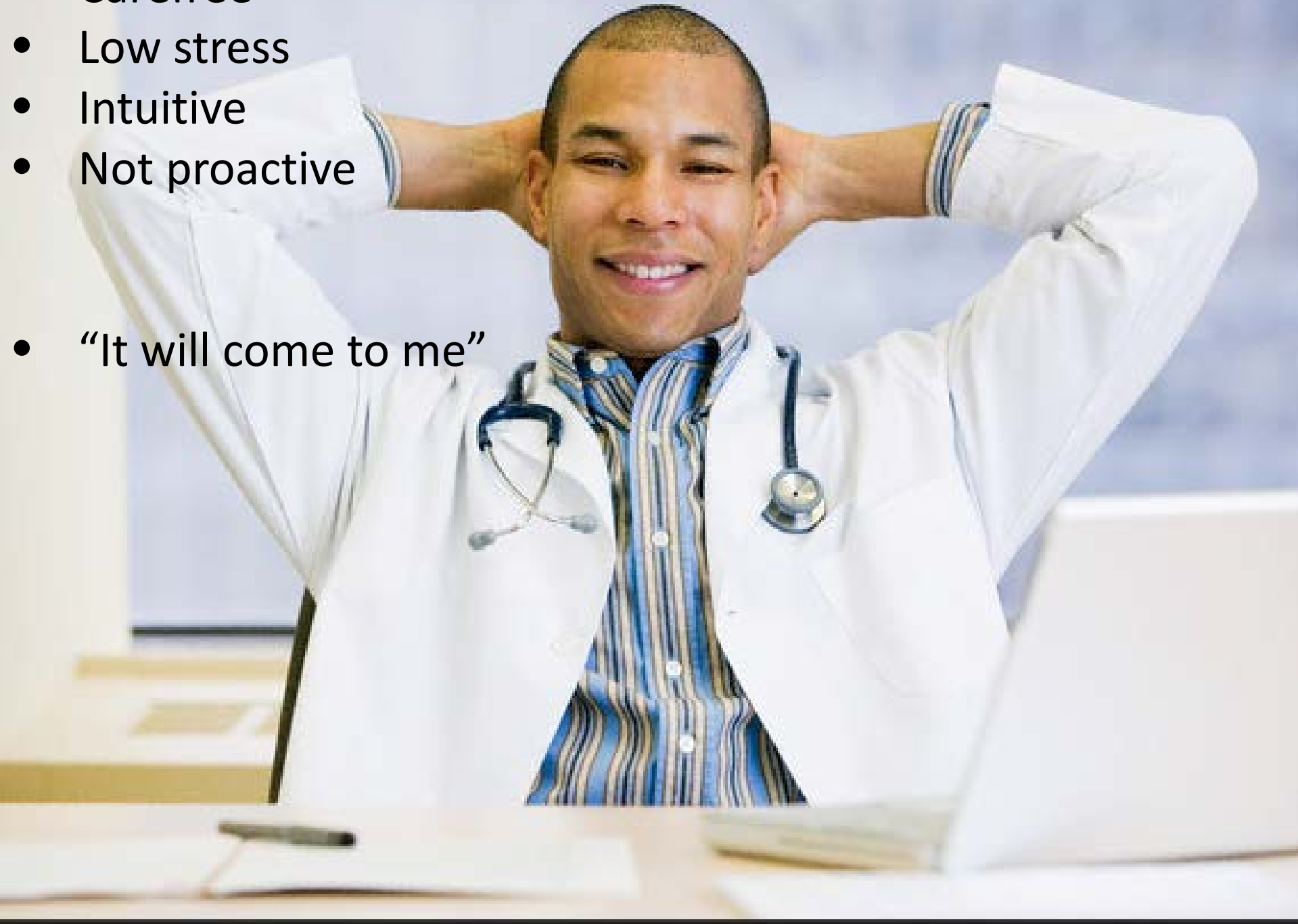


Avoiding Analysis Paralysis

- Discuss your choices with people you trust
- Identify barriers
- Use what has worked in the past
- Write it out
- Trust your instincts and judgment

- Carefree
- Low stress
- Intuitive
- Not proactive

- “It will come to me”



Pleasantly Passive



Pros:

- Great to be around!
- Open to experience
- Will find satisfaction

Pleasantly Passive



Cons:

- Lacks information
- Limited exposure
- ? lacks self-awareness
- Risk of late decider

Avoiding Pleasantly Passive

- Specialty selection is an active process
- Don't wait until the last minute
- Seek exposure to less common specialties
- Seek out different practice settings
- Revisit MSPI and PVIPS and map to specialties
- Explore/shadow/interview

- Average academically
- Repeated a course
- No research
- Minimal extracurriculars
- Step 1=below mean



Dermatology

- Average academically
- Repeated a course
- No research
- Minimal extracurriculars
- Step 1=below mean



Wishful Wanting

Pros:

- Optimism



Wishful Wanting

Cons:

- Risk of not matching
- Lack of insight



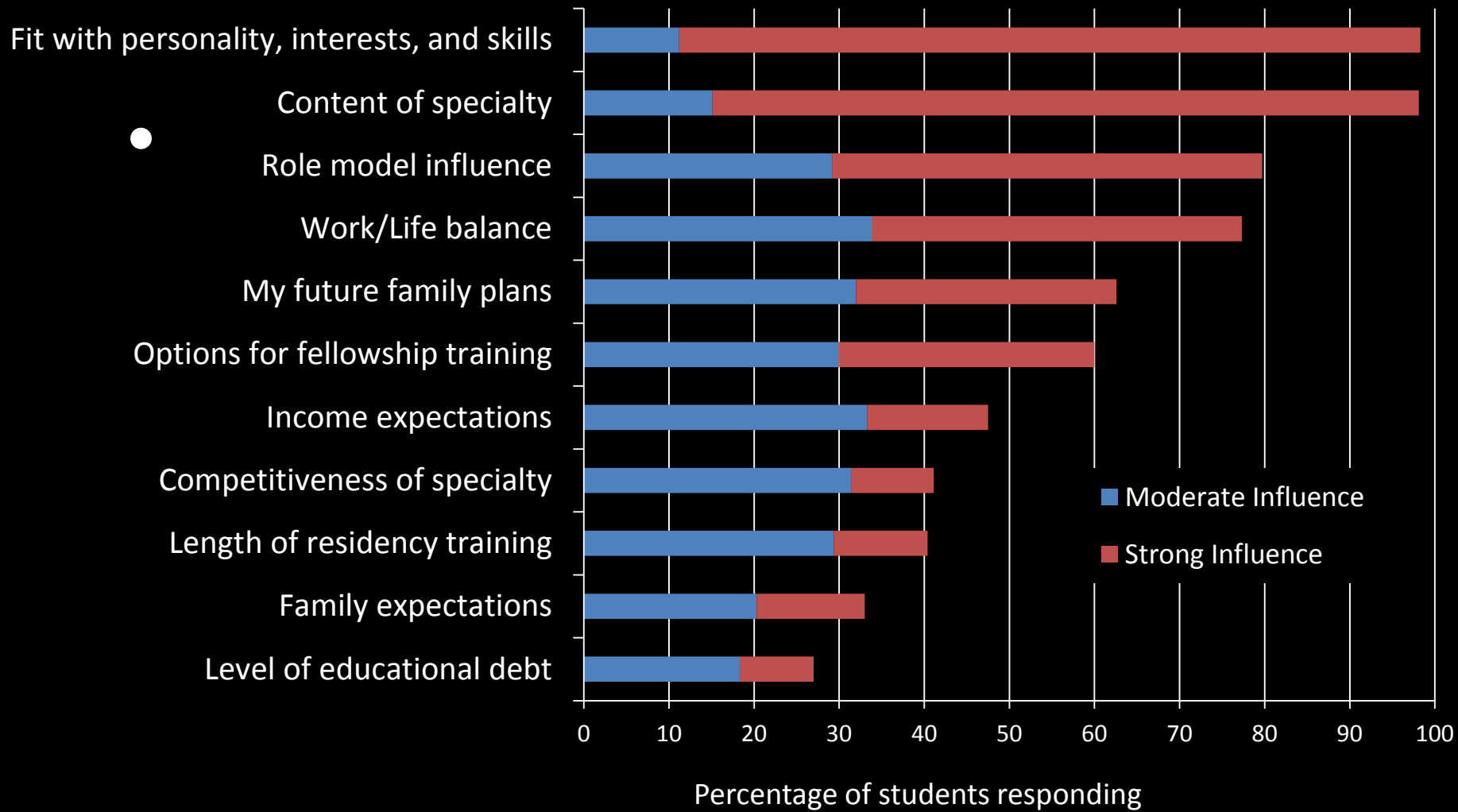
Avoiding Wishful Wanting

- Objectively assess your competitiveness
- Seek more information
- Listen to your advisors
- Make a backup plan

My decision-making process

- Interested in women's health → thought ob/gyn
- Did not LOVE the OR -- uh-oh
- Did not panic - pleasantly patient. I'll know
- Surprise: loved psychiatry (fascinating) and neurology (amazing attending) -- but too narrow
- Liked talking and interacting with pts
- Liked working with adults > children
- Internal medicine had all the qualities that I liked
 - Continuity of care, team dynamic, intellectually stimulating
 - But did not have AHA moment that I thought I would
- Then LOVED my residency
- Looking back, difficult not knowing my role as a medical student. Discomfort = not liking a specialty or rotation
- But in the end, gut feeling was correct

Influences on Specialty Choice



* Source: 2012 AAMC Graduation Questionnaire

What Tools Can Help?

Tools

Specialty Indecision Scale



The Specialty Indecision Scale (SIS), 2nd Edition, is a quick and reliable means for identifying areas of career indecision.

Readiness
Information
Identity
Barriers
Indecisiveness
Self-doubt

What Tools Can Help?

- Specialty Indecision Scale (SIS)
- Revisit MSPI-R (interests) self-assessment
- **Choices** Newsletters-especially:
 - *Gauging Your Competitiveness*
 - *How to Research and Evaluate Specialties*

SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Threats

Other CIM Resources

- "Choosing" article series
 - Family Medicine
 - General Surgery
 - Internal Medicine
 - OB/GYN
- Specialty Pages
- NRMP Data Reports

4th Year Panel

- Christy Ghandi – OB/GYN
- Allan Joseph – Pediatrics
- Matt Santos – Ophthalmology
- Daniel Eisenson – Surgery
- Yesenia Sanchez – Pediatrics
- Ana Bermudez – OB/GYN