

APPLICATION RATES TO SURGICAL RESIDENCY PROGRAMS IN CANADA

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SURGERY

BACKGROUND: In Canada, applications to surgical residency programs have been decreasing despite increased medical school enrolment. It has been suggested that limited exposure to surgical specialties in the first two years of medical school has been a contributing factor. The goal of this study was to compare surgical specialty application rates within Canada from 2007 to 2017 to the growing medical student enrollment rate.

METHODS: Data was provided by the research department of the Canadian Resident Matching Service (CaRMS) and the Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada. All medical student applications to surgical residency positions from 2007 to 2017 were included. Total ranks were used to determine application rates. Univariate descriptive analyses were performed for all variables. Linear regression modeling was used to assess the change in application rates over time.

RESULTS: The total number of applications to CaRMS across all medical specialties and the total number of medical school graduates increased significantly by 23.1% ($p < 0.01$) and 27.2% ($p < 0.01$), respectively. In this timeframe, the total number of applications to surgical residency programs decreased by 2.6%, but not significantly ($p > 0.05$). The number of applicants matched to surgery did not change significantly ($p > 0.05$).

CONCLUSION: From 2007 to 2017 the number of applications to CaRMS, and the number of medical graduates increased significantly. However, the number of applications to surgical residency programs decreased by 2.6%. These results agree with literature hypothesizing that the number and quality of applicants to surgical residency is decreasing, although insignificantly.