



Letter

In response to Mayte Bryce-Alberti's letter about "Factors influencing medical students' choice of specialization: A gender based systematic review"

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We thank Mayte Bryce-Alberti for her interest in our systematic review. In our paper [1], we deliberately used the term "gender" and not "sex", being more interested in cultural than biological differences. Moreover, most of the included studies collected data through survey, reflecting more the declared gender than the genetical sex. Moreover, even if we would have appreciated expanding our study to non-conforming gender individuals, this work is a systematic review, and none of the papers included mentioned more than two gender.

We didn't want to study gender balance among specialties, but to find solutions for attracting young doctors in disciplines that needed it the most. Trying to change gender cultural representations could be a good solution, and some progress had been made [2]. However, as a long-term desire, an intense work would be needed for changing barriers leading to gender predispositions [3].

Short term answers could be considered, not based on a modification of such cultural representations but on the analysis of specialties' choice occurring in a given socio-cultural context. Policymakers could

then adapt their attracting strategies depending on their own country context and needs. To this purpose, we described the actual expectations of future physicians according to specialties – even if we can only advocate for changes in cultural representations associated with gender in the following years. Our main point was indeed not to adapt attracting strategies based on our findings but to consider that incentives should not be the same according to the specialty concerned. Further studies investigating this aspect should probably be provided in each country and for each specialty.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors have nothing to declare.

References

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