



Letter

In response to “Factors influencing medical students’ choice of specialization: A gender based systematic review”

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To the editor,

Gender equity throughout medical specialties remains an unattained goal. Analyzing gender’s role in the career decision-making process of medical students would allow policy makers to develop strategies that ensure gender balance among specialties. Levaillant et al [1]. systematic review determined that males were mainly interested in surgery and internal medicine in both occidental (OC) and non-occidental (NOC) countries. Nevertheless, policymakers should not adapt their strategies according to the willingness of students in their country and the medical discipline concerned, without firstly evaluating structural barriers behind the apparently inherent predisposition of males and females.

This systematic review demonstrated that occidental women were more attracted to pediatrics than men (13.6% vs. 4.8%) [1]. Although stereotypically, females are portrayed as more nurturing and empathetic, this could be a misconception due to cultural expectations about gender roles [2]. Studies have reported that females more often believe that they have decreased opportunities for professional advancement based on their gender compared to males [3]. Additionally, female students expect family demands to limit career plans, while male students are less influenced by family concerns [4]. These constraints could be further influenced by socio-economically

stratification of countries beyond the OC/NOC classification. OCs and NOCs with low-to-middle incomes may share various similarities in contrast to their high-income counterparts.

Finally, future studies should expand from binary gender designations to include gender non-conforming individuals as well as transgender students. Sex and gender should not be used interchangeably since gender identity is a multifactorial complex trait and is relevant to this topic [5].

Declaration of Competing Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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