



urology



Fig. 4

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UROLOGY

Background

Urology focuses on the medical and surgical treatment of the male genitourinary system and female urinary tract. Urologists see patients with kidney, ureter, bladder, prostate, urethra and male genital structure disorders and injuries. They often coordinate care with nephrologists in treating patients with kidney disease. Urologists also may investigate and treat infertility and male sexual dysfunction.

Diagnostic procedures are very important for urologists. They use endoscopic, percutaneous and open surgery to treat congenital and acquired disorders of the reproductive and urinary systems and related structures. These specialists see male and female patients of all ages and work in both hospital and clinic settings.

Excellent surgical skills of manual dexterity and good hand-eye coordination are important to the specialty. Problems with infertility, impotence, and genitourinary function require the physician to take time talking to patients. In addition, the urologist who performs kidney transplantation must deal with the ethical dilemmas concerning scarce resources.

Profile

Of the 44 participants in the survey, 89 percent are certified by the American Board of Urology. Some of them have chosen to increase their focus by specializing in pediatric urology, renal transplantation and urologic oncology.

Many of the respondents (75 percent) were attracted to urology while studying medicine. Some considered other specialties while in school, such as general surgery (59 percent), and internal medicine (45 percent). Ninety-one percent of the respondents are male (9 percent female) with an overall average age of 49.

Ninety-four percent of the respondents said they are either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with their choice of specialty, while no one reported being dissatisfied.

Perspectives*What aspects of urology are most appealing?*

Thirty-two percent of the surveyed physicians enjoy being able to see, diagnose and treat a variety of patients with different illnesses. Twenty-three percent like the surgical aspect of the specialty.

One urologist said, "The instant gratification that surgical care offers is very rewarding."

Fourteen percent of the respondents, like the opportunity to make a contribution to patients' lifestyle.

What aspects of urology are least appealing?

The respondents cited the non-clinical aspects of their practice as least appealing: managed care (30 percent), lack of direct patient contact (21 percent) and paperwork (21 percent).

"There is a downside of working with specific patient populations as the effects of government interference fall especially heavy on this specialty," said one respondent.

What would you advise students to consider carefully before selecting urology?

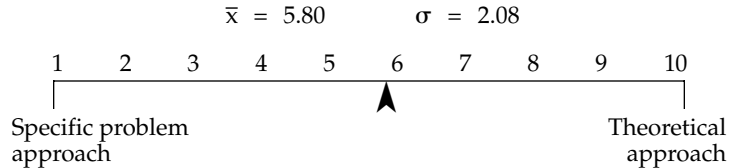
Most of the urologists surveyed find their work rewarding. Eleven percent of the physicians advised students to consider the practice location and position availability before deciding on the specialty.

One respondent said, "Students should look at the long, rigorous training that is required." Another physician said that, "The rapidly changing technologies may make certain aspects of the specialty obsolete in a few years."

Intellectual Content

According to the survey, urologists are divided between the "specific problem approach" and the "theoretical approach." Twenty-eight percent said they favor the practical aspect of their work, 39 percent said they favor the theoretical.

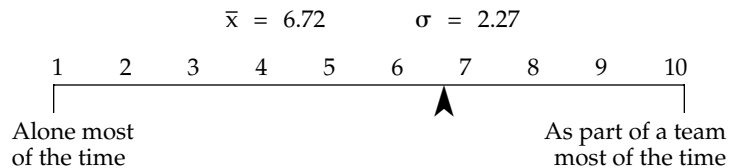
"There is a need for a great deal of academic knowledge to be a good and proficient urologist," said one respondent.



Interacting with Other Physicians

Fifty-nine percent of the physicians surveyed said they work as part of a team most of the time. Eleven percent said they work alone most of the time. The response is reflective of the dual nature of urologists' practice, both as surgeons and consultants.

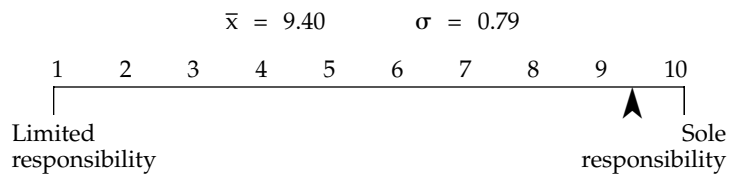
One respondent said: "I work with partners in my group therefore we get to bounce ideas and problems off each other regularly."



Responsibility

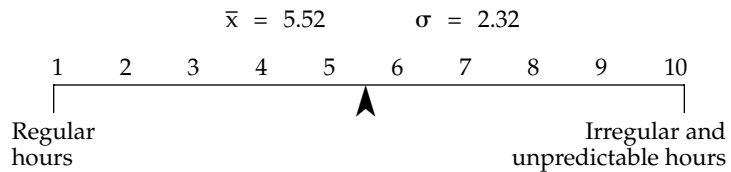
Ninety-six percent of the surveyed urologists said they assume a great deal of responsibility for their patients. They are responsible for diagnosing specific problems, correction by medical treatment or surgery and follow-up.

One respondent said, "Ultimate responsibility is with the urologist."

**Schedule**

There seems to be no consensus among the surveyed urologists concerning schedule. While 24 percent said they work regular hours, 21 percent said they work irregular and unpredictable hours.

"I work regular hours most of the time except for emergencies," said one urologist.



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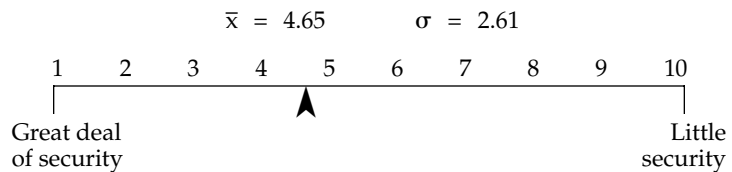
The urologists surveyed spend their week as follows:

Activities	Average Hours Per Week
Patient care	49
On call	37
Professional travel (i.e., en route to hospital, meetings)	4
Administrative activities	3
Professional activities (i.e., teaching, consulting, research)	3
Continuing education	3
Community service activities	1

Security

Fifty-five percent of these physicians reported being confident of their position and income, while 25 percent reported feeling little security.

Increasing governmental and other third-party interference and changes in health care policies concern some urologists. One respondent said. "Certain new advances have reduced the need for surgery, but opportunities often occur to provide alternatives."



Patient Characteristics and Types of Illnesses

The respondents treat adult and older patients most of the time. However, some urologists said they enjoy working with patients of all ages.

Age Group of Patients Average (%)

Infants	2
Children	6
Adults	40
Elderly	51

The surveyed urologists treat more men (62 percent) than women (38 percent). Fifty-five percent of their patients are classified as generally healthy, 16 percent acutely ill, 24 percent chronically ill and 5 percent terminally ill. Fifty percent work in a hospital environment and an equal amount work in managed care.

The conditions urologists most commonly treat are:

1. Prostrate cancer
2. Benign prostatic hypertrophy (BPH)
3. Renal / bladder stones
4. Incontinence
5. Urinary tract infections (UTIs)/Impotence

Among the conditions they find most challenging to treat are:

1. Cancer
2. Voiding dysfunction
3. Prostrate cancer
4. Renal / bladder stones
5. Bladder cancer

**Malpractice
Premiums**

The urologists surveyed paid an average of \$14,800 for malpractice insurance in 1998. This fee varies according to practice setting.

**Training
Requirements**

The AMA's 1999-2000 Graduate Medical Education Directory lists 121 accredited training programs in urology. Five years of postdoctoral training are required for certification by the American Board of Urology, the final twelve months of which must be spent as chief resident. Of these five years, one must be spent in general surgery and three must be in clinical urology. The remaining year must be spent in general surgery, urology, or other clinical disciplines relevant to urology and acceptable to the board.

Certification as a pediatric urologist requires an additional year of training in an approved fellowship program.

The certification exam is taken in two parts: a written qualifying exam (Part I) and the certifying exam (Part II). Part I consists of one written exam each in both urologic imaging and pathology and Part II is an oral certifying exam.

Certification is valid for a period of 10 years.

**Professional
Organizations**

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How to Choose a Medical Specialty, Anita D. Taylor, 2nd edition, W.B. Saunders Co., PA, 1993.

Getting into a Residency: A Guide for Medical Students, Kenneth V. Isserson, 4th edition, Galen Press Ltd., AZ, 1996.

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Mean Scores for Critical Factors

Autonomy	8.09	Manual/Mechanical	
Caring for Patients	9.00	Activities	8.52
Continuity of Care	8.38	Pressure	6.74
Diversity	7.16	Responsibility	9.40
Family/Leisure Time	6.14	Schedule	5.52
Focus of Expertise	8.36	Security	4.65
Income	6.79	Sense of	
Innovative Thinking	7.38	Accomplishment	9.00
Intellectual Content	5.80	Status Among	
Interacting with Other Physicians	6.72	Colleagues	7.30

Exercise

After you have finished the above career option profile, please complete the following exercise:

- ◆ List your top five Critical Factors below;
- ◆ In Column A, list the rating you gave each of these factors in your Briefing Document;
- ◆ In Column B, list the mean scores for each factor as found in the above profile;
- ◆ Subtract the items in Column B from those in Column A and write the remainder in Column C;
- ◆ Total the numbers in Column C. **NOTE:** Ignore + and – signs.

The closer the number at the bottom is to “0,” the more likely it is that this specialty may be a match for you and requires your further investigation. This total alone, however, means very little until you have compared it with those from each specialty profile.

Critical Factors	A (Your Rating)	B (Mean Scores)	C (Differences)
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
		Total:	_____