

Orthopaedic Trauma Fellowship Match Rates: DO Medical Degree Initials Matter?

Kenneth Choy, DO; Lisa K. Cannada, MD; Peter B. White, DO; Scott P. Steinmann, MD; Randy M. Cohn, MD; Adam Bitterman, DO

Purpose: Since 2010, orthopaedic fellowships have used the San Francisco Match platform. Discrepancies have previously been identified in terms of gender and medical degree throughout orthopaedic education. The purpose of this study was to evaluate trends in the degree type and gender of applicants to trauma fellowships.

Methods: Match data from 2012 to 2023 were extracted and analyzed. Data regarding number of applicants and match rates based on applicant degree and gender were evaluated. Pearson's correlation test was used to evaluate trends and proportions for number of applicants and match rates. Fisher's exact test was used to compare the match rates of allopathic and osteopathic applicants as well as male and female candidates.

Results: There were 1031 non-IMG (international medical graduate) applicants for trauma fellowships from 2012-2023, including 193 osteopathic applicants (18.5%) and 848 allopathic applicants (81.5%). The number of osteopathic applicants ($r = 0.7$, $P = 0.004$) and their match rate ($r = 0.69$, $P = 0.005$) had a significant increase annually over the study period. For allopathic residents, the number of applicants ($r = 0.35$, $P = 0.12$) and their match rate ($r = 0.37$, $P = 0.10$) did not change significantly. Allopathic residents were more likely to match into trauma fellowship than osteopathic residents ($P = 0.0001$). There were 173 female applicants (16.6%) and 868 male applicants (83.4%). Females had a significant increase in number of applicants ($r = 0.84$, $P = 0.00015$) and match rate ($r = 0.84$, $P = 0.00019$). Male applicants had no significant change in number of applicants ($r = 0.1$, $P = 0.37$) or match rate ($r = 0.34$, $P = 0.13$). Although, female applicants matched at a slightly higher rate than male applicants (86.2% vs 84.8%), this difference was not statistically significant (odds ratio [OR] = 1.53, $P = 0.10$).

Conclusion: Despite an increase in the number of osteopathic applicants and their match rate, allopathic candidates are more likely to match into trauma fellowships. There is no statistically significant difference regarding the match rate between male and female applicants. The number of females applying to trauma fellowship remains disproportionately lower than expected.