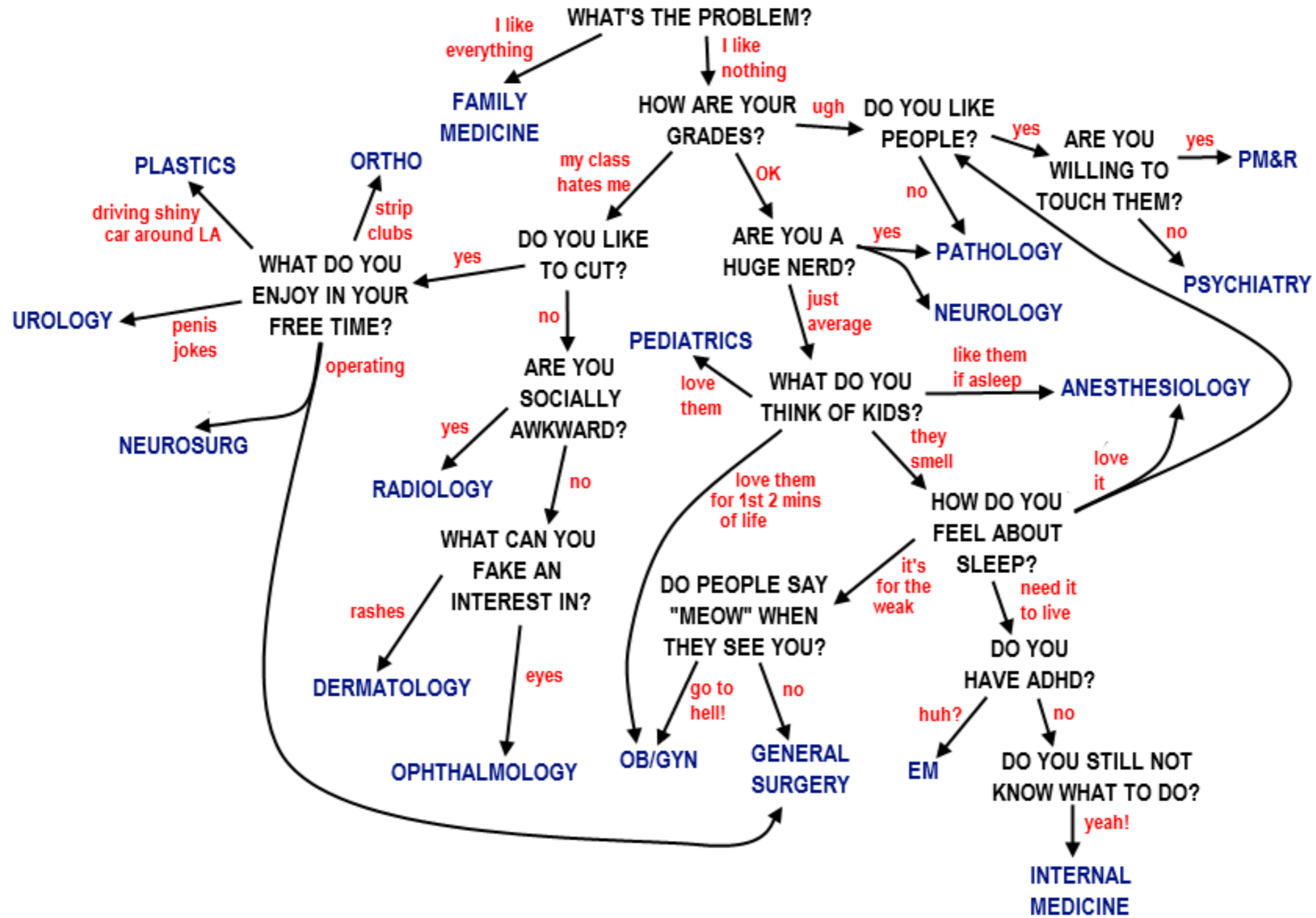


I DON'T KNOW WHAT MEDICAL SPECIALTY TO CHOOSE!



Choosing a Specialty

What influences specialty choice?

Introduction

- Making the right specialty choice is (obviously) a pivotal career decision, and is something that should be done carefully and in full possession of the facts.
- This presentation aims to give some insight into the things that can be influential medical specialty when choosing a medical specialty
- The insight it gives into the factors can be used by trainees making specialty choices, and a by those providing them with career support
- It is intended to be informative and interesting, providing ‘food for thought’ and ideas for further reading.

What influences specialty choice?

Choosing a Medical Specialty: A Critique of Literature In The Light of “Curious Findings”*

R. BRUCE W. ANDERSON
University of Texas, Arlington



“We lose a little dexterity, but we gain a lot of confidence.”



Specialty choice: Peer Pressure

- For many years it was assumed that factors such as ‘personal attributes and interests’ were of prime importance, for example dextrous doctors would naturally choose to be surgeons.
- Other factors, such as the profession of an individual’s father was expected to be highly influential as well
- One of the first papers written on the subject of specialty choices was Anderson’s paper from 1974, “Choosing a Medical Specialty, Critiquing the Literature in the Light of ‘Curious Findings’”, where he was surprised to find the biggest determinant of specialty choice was the influence of peers rather than family. (1)
- Although the concept of peer pressure is no longer unexpected, it should be recognised as being of prime importance for today’s trainees, who are influenced by peers both in person and via social media.

What influences specialty choice?



Scandinavian Journal of Primary Health Care, 2012; 30: 35–40

informa
healthcare

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Career choice and place of graduation among physicians in Norway

STIAN LANGELAND **WESNES**¹, OLAF AASLAND^{2,3} & ANDERS BAERHEIM¹

Exposure to specialty as student

- A recent report from Scandanavia by Wesnes and his colleagues suggests that qualification from certain medical schools increased the likelihood of working as a general practitioner (2)
- The paper seems to show that an increasing exposure of medical students to general practice during training increases the likelihood of doctors pursuing such a career path.
- The relevance of such 'early exposure' to specialties and subsequent career choices is particularly topical at the moment, and has been recognised by initiatives such as the RCoA/FICM initiative 'Science, skills and safety' (3)

What influences specialty choice?



World J Surg (2011) 35:704–709
DOI 10.1007/s00268-011-0983-0



ORIGINAL SCIENTIFIC REPORTS

Defining Surgical Role Models and Their Influence on Career Choice

P. Ravindra · J. E. F. Fitzgerald

Effective Role Models

- Ravinder and Fitzgerald surveyed all doctors qualifying from Nottingham University in one annual cohort using a questionnaire designed to explore the qualities and attributes of surgical trainers.(4)
- Those trainees able to identify a strong surgical role model were twice as likely to be considering a surgical career.
- The characteristics of an effective role model were also explored: teaching skills, personal attributes and clinical abilities being most important.
- The importance of this to any specialty cannot be underestimated; experiences during a medical student placement may set the career path for the next 40 years

What influences specialty choice?

The screenshot shows the BMJ website interface. At the top left is the BMJ logo with the tagline "Helping doctors make better decisions". Navigation tabs include Home, Research, Education, News, Comment, Multimedia, Careers, Specialties, and Archive. A search bar is present with the text "Search bmj.com". Below the navigation is a search filter section with "Search all BMJ research articles" and date filters for "From 1840" and "To 2012". The main article title is "Career preferences of doctors who qualified in the United Kingdom in 1993 compared with those of doctors qualifying in 1974, 1977, 1980, and 1983". The article is identified as a "PAPER" from "BMJ 1996; 313" with a DOI link. Social media sharing options for Twitter, Google+, and Facebook are visible. On the right, there is a "LATEST JOBS" section with tabs for "UK jobs" and "International jobs", listing a "University of Cambridge Clinical Lecturer in Medical Virology" position.

The screenshot shows the ASME medical education website. The ASME logo is on the left, and the site name "medical education" with the URL "www.mededuc.com" is on the right. The main article title is "Career choices of United Kingdom medical graduates of 2002: questionnaire survey" by Trevor W Lambert, Michael J Goldacre, and Gill Turner. The article was first published online on 2 MAY 2006 with a DOI of 10.1111/j.1365-2929.2006.02480.x. A thumbnail image of the journal cover is shown. On the right side, there is a "SEARCH" box with a dropdown menu set to "In this issue". Below the search box is an "ARTICLE TOOLS" section with options: "Get PDF (101K)", "Save to My Profile", "E-mail Link to this Article", "Export Citation for this Article", "Get Citation Alerts", and "Request Permissions". At the bottom right, there are social media sharing icons and the text "Medical Education Volume 40, Issue 6, pages 514-521, June 2006".

Career choice changes over time

- There have been changes to factors career choices over time.
- Trevor Lambert and colleagues have used a series of postal questionnaires of several cohorts of UK medical graduates (on a triennial basis) and asked questions about career choices and factors behind the choices.(5)
- They have also repeatedly demonstrated a difference between the career aspirations of newly qualified doctors, and number of consultants working in the specialty, something of great relevance to ICM, where often trainees declare an interest in the specialty, often to lose it as their training progresses.

Summary: specialty choice?



- All the following can influence specialty choice:
 - What you like and want to do
 - What you think you're good at
 - Where you trained and what you did as a medical student and FY doctor
 - Specialists you've worked with, their teaching abilities and clinical skills
 - What your peers think and other 'social pressures'

And importantly...

- We must all remember the ‘unconscious’ advice that we give during our day to day work.
- The ‘signals’ we can give off when we’re having a good or a bad ‘day at the office’ may stay with potential intensivists for a very long time.
- A single teaching session on a ward round may be the thing that encourages a medical student to change their choice of career. A less positive experience may have the opposite effect.
- Perhaps the challenge for ICM is to show what fun the specialty can be: hard work but rewarding, busy but collaborative, intense, but diverse.

- References:

- 1. Bruce RR and Anderson WW. Choosing a medical specialty: a critique of the literature in the light of curious findings. *J Health Soc Behav*, 1975 vol 16 (2) 152-162.
- 2. Wesnes SL, Aasland O, Baerheim A. Career choice and place of graduation among physicians in Norway. *Scand J Prim Health Care*. 2012 Mar;30(1):35–40.
- 3. Science, skills and safety: a framework for medical student education in anaesthesia, intensive care, pain and perioperative medicine. RCoA 2017.
- 4. Ravindra P, Fitzgerald JEF. Defining surgical role models and their influence on career choice. *World J Surg*. 2011 Apr;35(4):704–9.
- 5. Lambert TW, Goldacre MJ, Edwards C, Parkhouse J. Career preferences of doctors who qualified in the United Kingdom in 1993 compared with those of doctors qualifying in 1974, 1977, 1980, and 1983. *BMJ*. 1996 Jul 6;313(7048): 19–24.