

A Survey on Disabilities and Disability Awareness in General Surgery Residents in the US



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Introduction

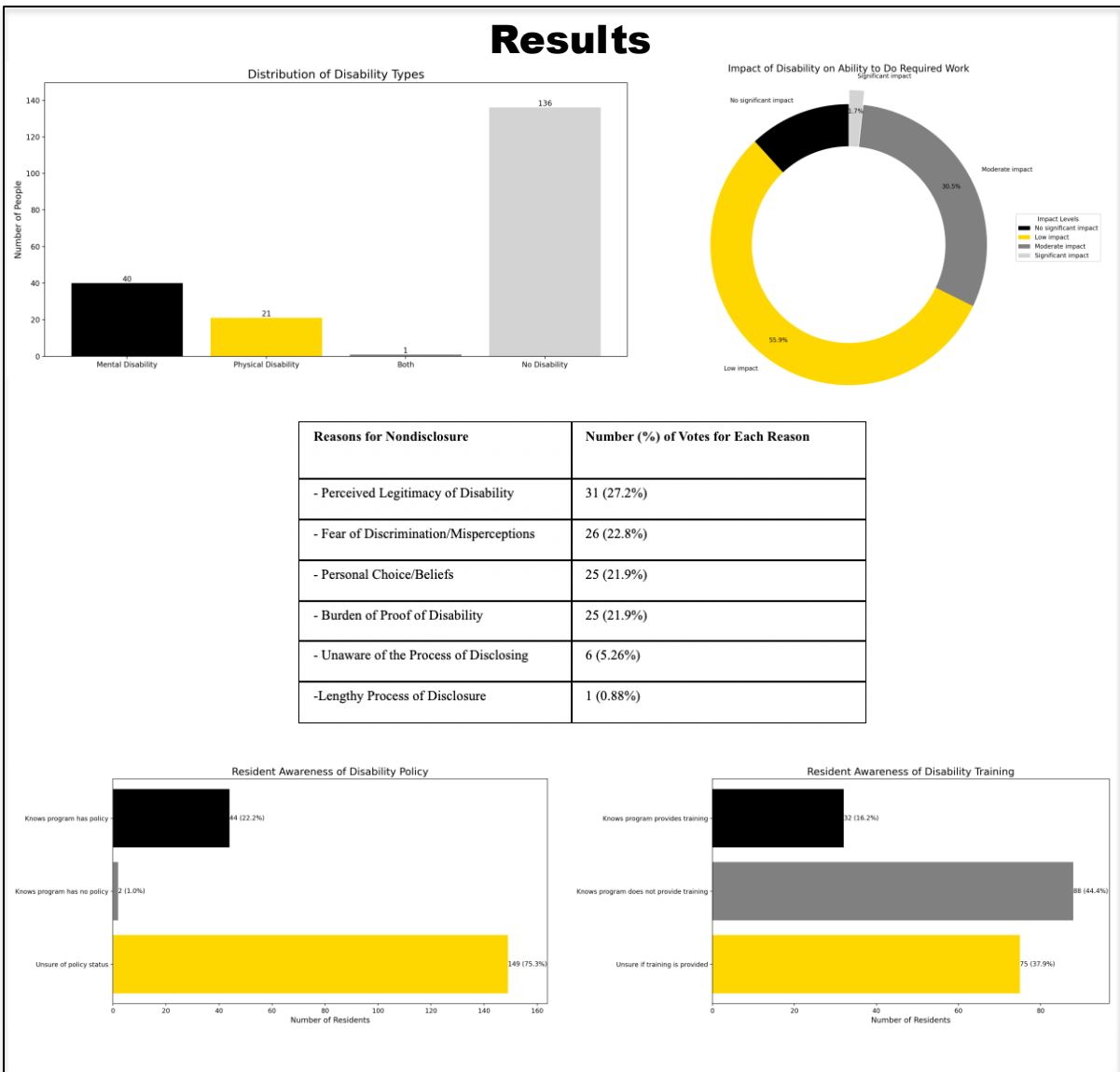
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the American Disability Association (ADA) define a disability as any condition of the body or mind that substantially affects one's performance in one or more major life activities.
- Around 25% of adults in the United States (US), nearly 61 million individuals, have at least one physical or mental disability, with mental health conditions being the leading cause of disability.
- The American College of Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) and American Association of Medical Colleges (AAMC) require residency programs to maintain a disability policy and provide accommodations consistent with this policy.

Study Aims

- Establish prevalence of disability in general surgery residents.
- Identify barriers to disability disclosures.
- Evaluate disability policy and awareness among residents.

Methods

- Descriptive, cross-sectional cohort study of 198 general surgery residents from various residency programs across the US
- Residents completed a self-administered, anonymous questionnaire consisting of 33 multiple choice questions during an open-survey period.



Discussion

- Notable prevalence of disability among general surgery residents, with approximately 31% reporting either mental or physical disability.
- Majority of residents indicated that their conditions impacted their ability to work, and some requiring accommodations.
- Barriers to disclosure include fear of discrimination, burden of proof, and concern of a negative impact on career progression.
- Majority of the residents had not received training on how to interact with colleague or individuals with disabilities, and many were unaware of their program's disability policies.
- Identified barriers not only affect well-being of residents but could influence the diversity and inclusivity of the medical workforce.

Conclusion

- There is a significant prevalence of disability among general surgery residents, with many experiencing impacts on their ability to work yet facing barrier to disclosure due
- Residency programs should implement a comprehensive disability policy that addresses disability training and clearly communicates available resources.
- ACGME and AAMC guidelines should be at the forefront of disability policy design and inform residency programs on how to appropriately provide accommodations.

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