

5. Specialty Preference and Trend Analysis Among Medical Students: An Institutional Cross-Sectional Study

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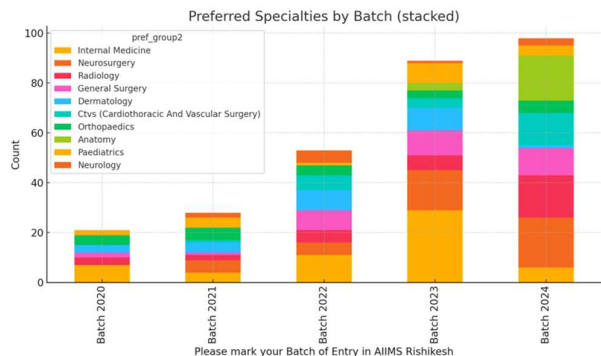
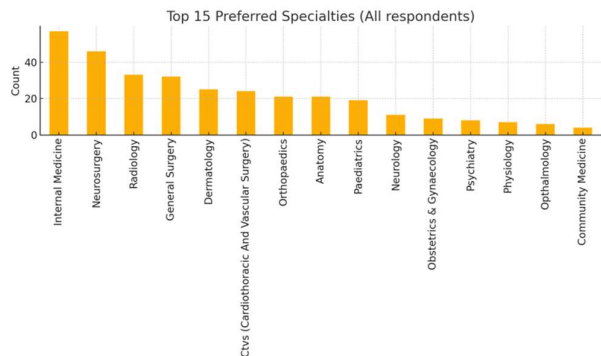
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Introduction: Medical student specialty preferences directly impact future healthcare workforce distribution. Among the top 1,500 NEET PG rankers, 42% chose MD General Medicine and 30% selected Radiodiagnosis, while only 6.6% opted for General Surgery, signaling a shift away from high-risk procedural field.^{1,2} Understanding these trends is essential for informed curriculum design and workforce planning. **Methods:** We conducted a cross-sectional survey of medical students at AIIMS Rishikesh. An anonymous online questionnaire was administered, and 357 students indicated their preferred specialty. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and chi-square tests (SPSS v23) to assess associations between specialty choice, year of entry, and gender. **Results:** Internal Medicine was the most preferred specialty (57 students), followed by Neurosurgery (46), Radiology (33), and General Surgery (32). Specialty preferences varied significantly across batches (χ^2 test, $p < 0.05$), indicating year-dependent trends. Males more frequently favoured Internal Medicine, Neurosurgery, and General Surgery, whereas females more often chose Dermatology, Paediatrics, and Obstetrics/Gynaecology; however, these gender-based differences were not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 37.25$, $df = 32$, $p = 0.2402$). **Conclusion:** These findings highlight prevailing interests in medical and surgical fields among our students. The significant variation by entry year suggests that curricular exposure or cohort factors may influence career choice. Although gender-based patterns were observed, the lack of statistical significance indicates that multiple factors contribute to specialty selection. These insights underscore the importance of targeted career guidance and curriculum planning to ensure a balanced future medical workforce.

Specialty	Count
Internal Medicine	57
Neurosurgery	46
Radiology	33
General Surgery	32
Dermatology	25
Ctvs (Cardiothoracic And Vascular Surgery)	24
Orthopaedics	21
Anatomy	21
Paediatrics	19

Neurology	11
Obstetrics & Gynaecology	9
Psychiatry	8
Physiology	7
Ophthalmology	6
Community Medicine	4



Interpretation:

- Internal Medicine, Neurosurgery, Radiology and General Surgery are among the most commonly selected specialties.
- There is a significant association between batch and specialty choice, suggesting preferences vary by year of entry.

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