

Medical Student Research Outcomes at The University of Kansas

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Introduction. With the increased demand for medical students in research, many medical schools have implemented programs to bolster student involvement in research. The few previous studies evaluating these programs are institution-specific and have not considered residency matching outcomes. This study is the first to do so at The University of Kansas School of Medicine.

Methods. The authors analyzed 1979-2024 Summer Research Training Program (SRTP) data, along with 2018-2023 Student Research Forum (SRF) and residency match data.

Results. The data included 1,761 SRTP students and 357 SRF students which subsequently matched into a residency program. SRTP participation increased 6-fold from 1979-2024, while SRF participation doubled from 2017-2022. Both were driven by an increase in clinical research projects, compared to basic science. Of the 428 SRF projects, over 21 medical specialty topics were represented, the most being done in internal medicine (92), non-clinical medicine (e.g. medical education (59)), and orthopedic surgery (33). Of those that eventually matched into a competitive specialty (interventional radiology, neurosurgery, orthopedic surgery, otolaryngology, or plastic surgery) 50.5% on average did research in their eventual specialty, compared to an average of 23.0% of those that matched into less-competitive specialties.

Conclusions. The results reveal an overall increase in medical student research participation over time, driven by more clinical research projects. Despite this growth, there was not a significant difference between the number of competitive and less-competitive specialty topics presented at SRF. However, those who matched into competitive specialties were significantly more likely to have conducted research in their match specialty.