

Lesnewski R, Prine L, Gold M. Abortion Training as an Integral Part of Residency Training. *Family Medicine* 2003;35(6):386-387.

Purpose: Determine availability of medical and surgical abortion training in family medicine residency training programs in the U.S.

Methods: Survey conducted by the Society of Teachers of Family Medicine (STFM) Group on Abortion Training and Access. Surveys were sent via email and snail mail to residency directors of all 480 family medicine residency programs in the U.S. (Surveys were tested with several local residency directors and modified prior to national dispensing). 337 Program directors returned the survey (a response rate of 70%). A previous study examining the availability of AB training in Ob/Gyn programs suggested that some directors overstated the amount of training actually offered; because of this, positive responses about AB training were confirmed through conversations with chief residents.

Results: 21 residency directors stated that their program offered AB training as a routine part of residency training; follow-up phone conversations with chief residents at those respective programs revealed that 11 of these programs actually offered AB training as an integral part of the curriculum. At these 11 programs, AB training was provided either in a standard Gyn rotation and/or at a family health center. In 2002, these 11 programs had a match rate substantially higher than the overall match rate in family practice. Of the other ten programs, eight did not provide training as an integral part of residency training, and two were in the process of closing. Of the eight active programs, four made AB training available only through an elective, three allowed residents interested in AB training to find and set up an elective for themselves, and one program did not offer AB training in any capacity.

AB training in the residency programs:

46% (155): No AB training available

37% (122): Training is available for residents who find and set up an elective themselves, using their elective time

10% (34): Training is available during residents' elective time, using established relationships with abortion facilities

7% (25): AB training is a routine component of the required Gyn/Women's health rotation. Conversations with chief residents revealed that only 3%

(11) of these programs provided fully integrated AB training.

Residency Programs' approach to Med AB provision:

31% (103): Med AB not available to patients seen in this dept

66% (219): Med AB available by referral to another dept of facility

3% (11): Med AB provided by this family medicine dept

Discussion: The authors were curious about whether a high demand for AB training contributes to the high match rates in the few programs that do offer completely integrated AB training. Data from the National Academy of Family Physicians, STFM, and the National Resident Matching Program indicate that the match rate for family medicine residency programs with fully integrated AB training is 97%, compared with a rate of 79% for all U.S. family practice residency programs. Confounding variables (such as location) may account for the high match rates of the programs with fully integrated AB training; perhaps these 11 programs are located in particularly

desirable places. A previous study indicated that family medicine residents are attracted to programs with an emphasis on procedural training; perhaps a general strength in procedural training rather than the availability of AB training contributed to the higher match rates of these 11 programs. The author states that while the increased availability of AB training may not be a causal factor for the high match rates, the correlation is interesting and suggests an area for further study. Also, such information could provide support for program directors thinking about expanding availability of AB training in their programs.