

Junk TV: American advocacy groups and parents in Massachusetts are suing the Nickelodeon TV network and Kellogg Co. in a bid to stop junk food marketing to children. The plaintiffs are the Center for Science in the Public Interest, a non-profit US advocacy group, the Boston-based Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood, and 2 parents. In a study last fall, CSPI found that of the 168 ads for food that appeared on Nickelodeon, 88% were for foods of poor nutritional quality. Of the 54 Kellogg ads shown during 27.5 hours of Saturday morning programming, CSPI found 98% were for nutritionally poor foods. "Nickelodeon and Kellogg engage in business practices that literally sicken our children," says CSPI Executive Director Michael F. Jacobson. The lawsuit seeks to stop the companies from marketing junk food when 15% or more of the audience is 8 years old or younger. — Compiled by Barbara Sibbald, *CMAJ*

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PULSE

How do we choose our specialty?

Results from the 2004 National Physician Survey illustrate interesting differences in how physicians choose their specialty (Fig. 1).

Among second-year residents who completed the survey, those who chose family medicine claimed that the most important factors were the doctor-patient relationship, and workload flexibility and predictability; the least important factors included prestige, earning potential and research potential. Residents enrolled in specialties reported being influenced mostly by the level of intellectual stimulation and challenge; prestige and earning potential played a greater role than they did for family medicine residents.

There were also differences between male and female residents. In family medicine, female trainees were more likely than their male counterparts to

choose level of intellectual stimulation and challenge, doctor-patient relationship, and workload flexibility and predictability as important influences, whereas the opposite was true for ability to pursue non-work-related interests, training opportunities and earning potential. Among residents in specialty training programs, female trainees were again more likely than the male residents to choose doctor-patient relationship as an important influence, whereas more male than female residents chose training opportunities, workload flexibility and predictability, influence of a mentor, ability to pursue non-work-related interests, earning potential, research opportunities and prestige.

The results give some insight into

how today's medical trainees select which career path to follow. Although factors such as earning potential and prestige played an important role for some, most residents were influenced by their interest level in a particular field and the level of intellectual challenge involved as well as by lifestyle issues such as workload predictability and flexibility. These survey results support the current view that today's trainees are more interested in factors related to lifestyle than to prestige, and they may help explain the decreased interest in fields such as cardiac surgery and neurosurgery, which were previously highly competitive. — Mark O. Baerlocher, Toronto

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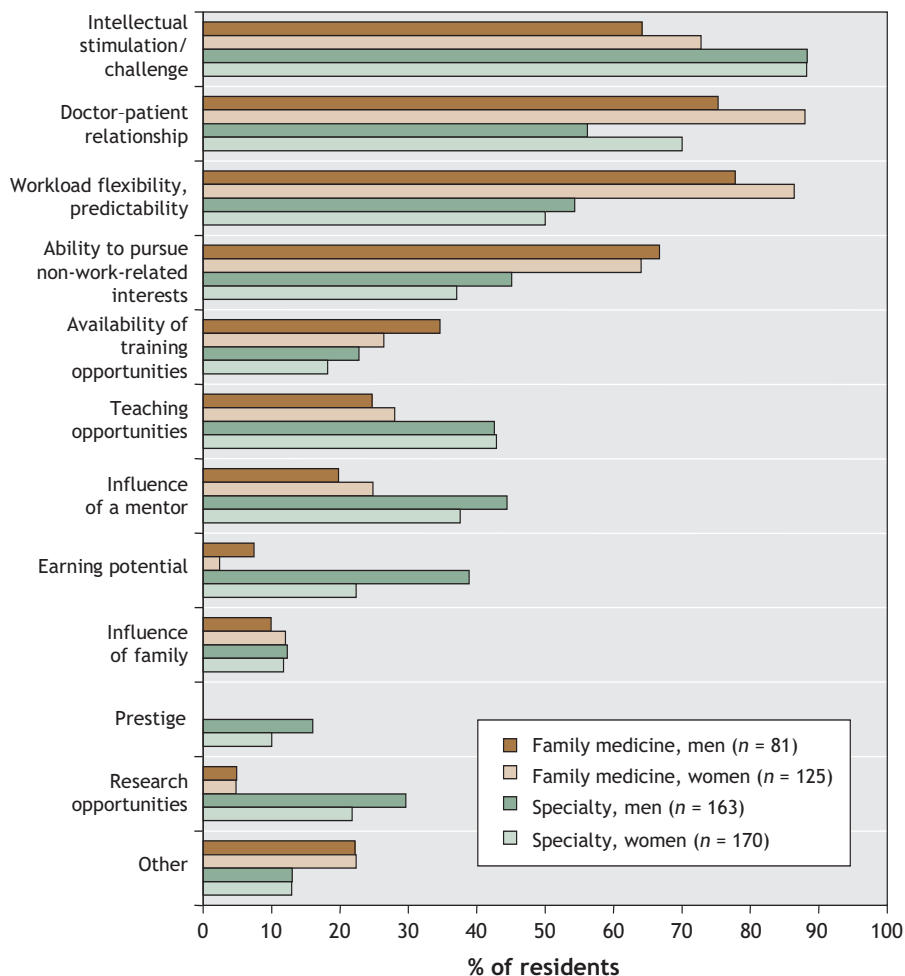


Fig. 1: Factors influencing second-year residents' choice of residency training, by sex and broad residency class (family medicine v. specialty medicine). Source: 2004 CFPC/CMA/RCPC National Physician Survey.