



Demystifying the Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery Residency Applicant Spreadsheet: A Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis

Rose S Maisner MD¹, Mehdi S Lemdani BA², Isabel Silva BS², Ahmed M Afifi, MD¹

¹Division of Plastic Surgery, Department of Surgery, University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health, Madison, WI

²Division of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, Department of Surgery, Rutgers New Jersey Medical School, Newark, NJ

BACKGROUND

- Plastic surgery is well-known as one of the most competitive specialties to match into.

	Plastic Surgery	Overall
US MD Senior Match Rate	62.7%	89.6%
Mean Step 1 Score	251	236
Mean Step 2 CK Score	257	248
Mean number of abstracts, presentations, and publications	28.4	7.9
AOA Membership Percentage	37.7%	16.8%

Table 1. 2022 NRMP Matched Applicant Statistics

- Applicants, especially those without home programs, need easily accessible, online resources to learn more about the application process and specific programs, find research and educational opportunities, and connect with others interested in the field.

- Across specialties, residency applicants have created online spreadsheets that serve as centralized databases of anonymously self-reported information.

OBJECTIVES

- Compare the statistics of spreadsheet users to that reported by the National Resident Matching Program (NRMP)
- Characterize the content of the specific residency program reviews
- Characterize the content of the chat tab.

METHODS

- Publicly available ‘Plastic Surgery Match’ spreadsheets from 2018-2022 were reviewed.
- One-sample t-test was used to compare spreadsheet applicant data to NRMP data, with the reference value being equal to the weighted average of matched and unmatched applicants.
- ‘Program Impressions’ tab data was reviewed, ranking reviews independently by two authors in a blinded fashion on a Likert Scale from 1 (all negative) to 5 (all positive). The average of the two reviewers’ scores was taken.
- The ‘Chat’ tab data was reviewed and categorized by 2 reviewers.

RESULTS

- 172 spreadsheet users self-reporting their applicant statistics
- Only 15 (8.7%) of spreadsheet users report match status. 14 (93.3%) matched.

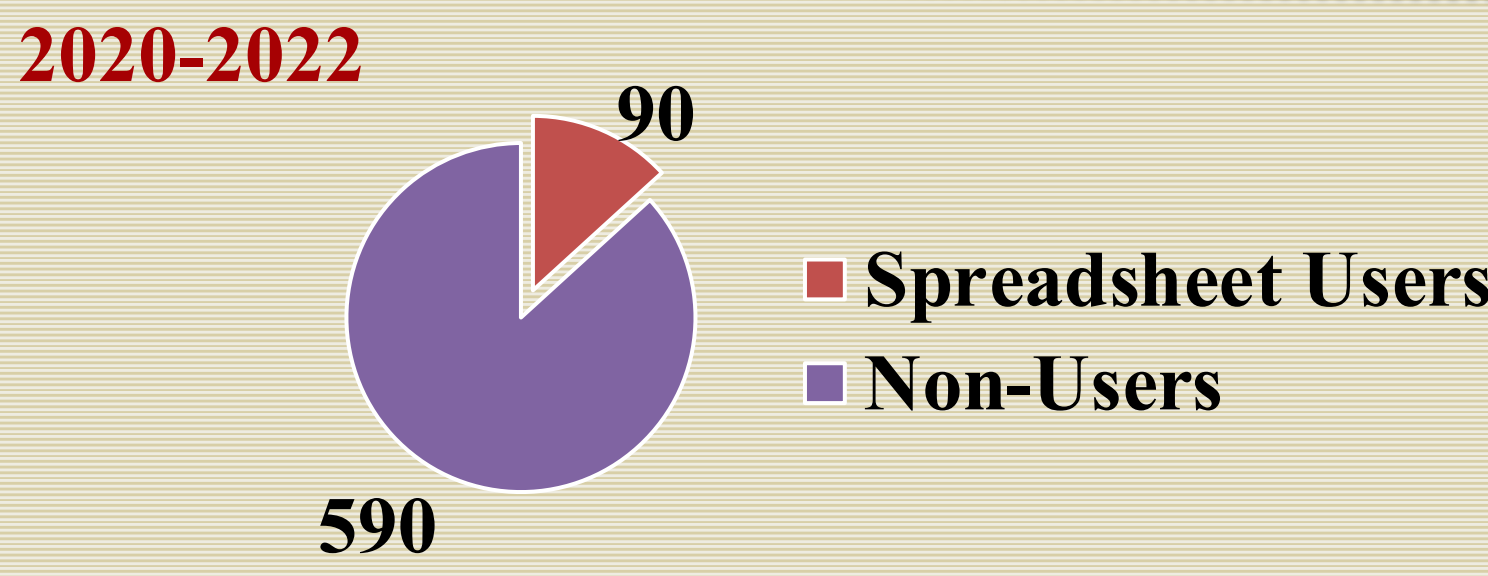
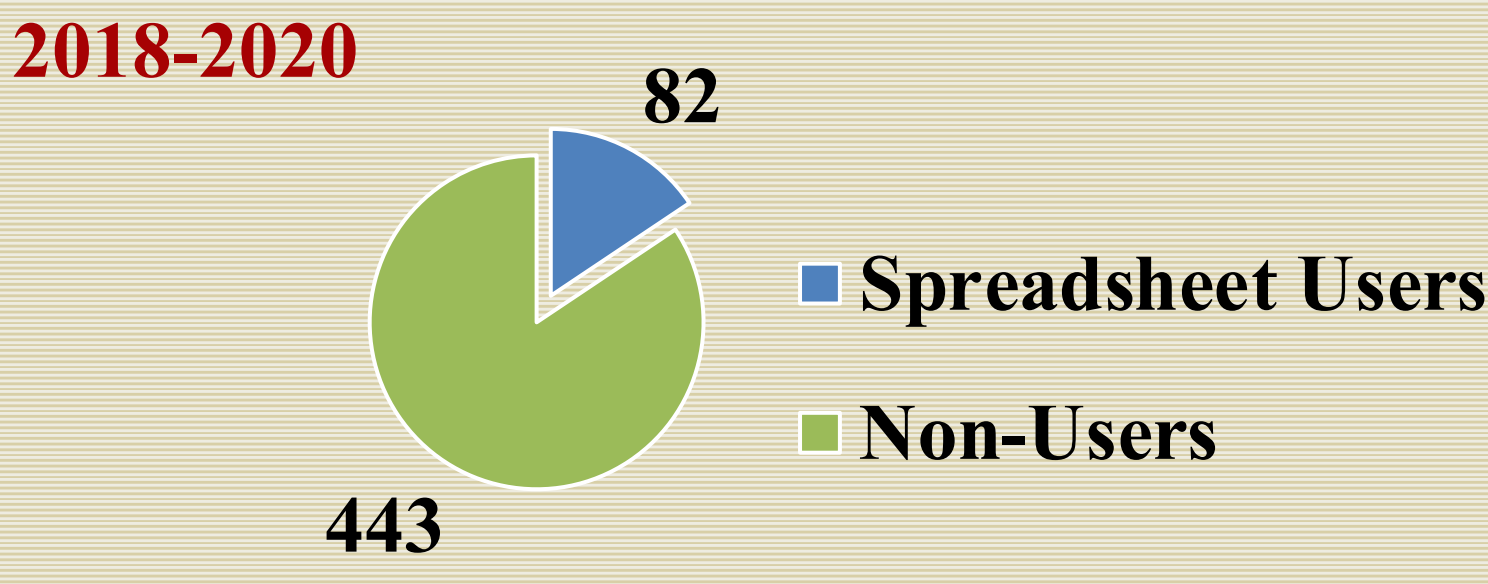


Figure 1. Number of Self-Reported Applicants Using the Online Plastic Surgery Spreadsheet

- The mean applicant program impression score ranged between 3.68-4.09.

Program Questions	63.2%
Application Questions	15.6%
Spreadsheet Suggestions	9.2%
Mentorship	5.2%
Encouragement	5.0%
Match Statistics	1.7%

Table 2. Characterization of the Online Plastic Surgery Spreadsheet ‘Chat’ Tab Content

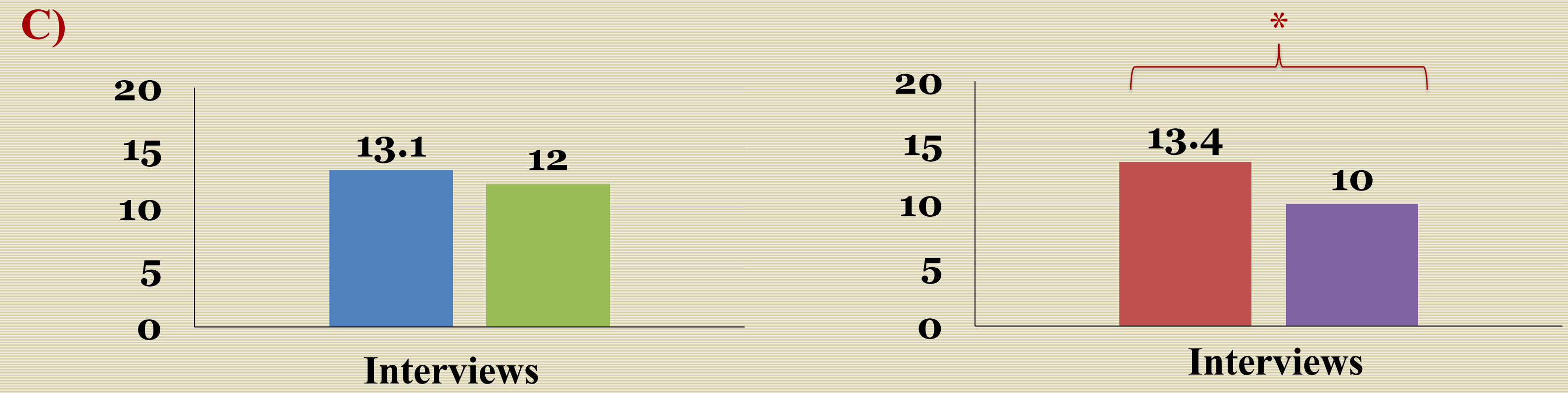
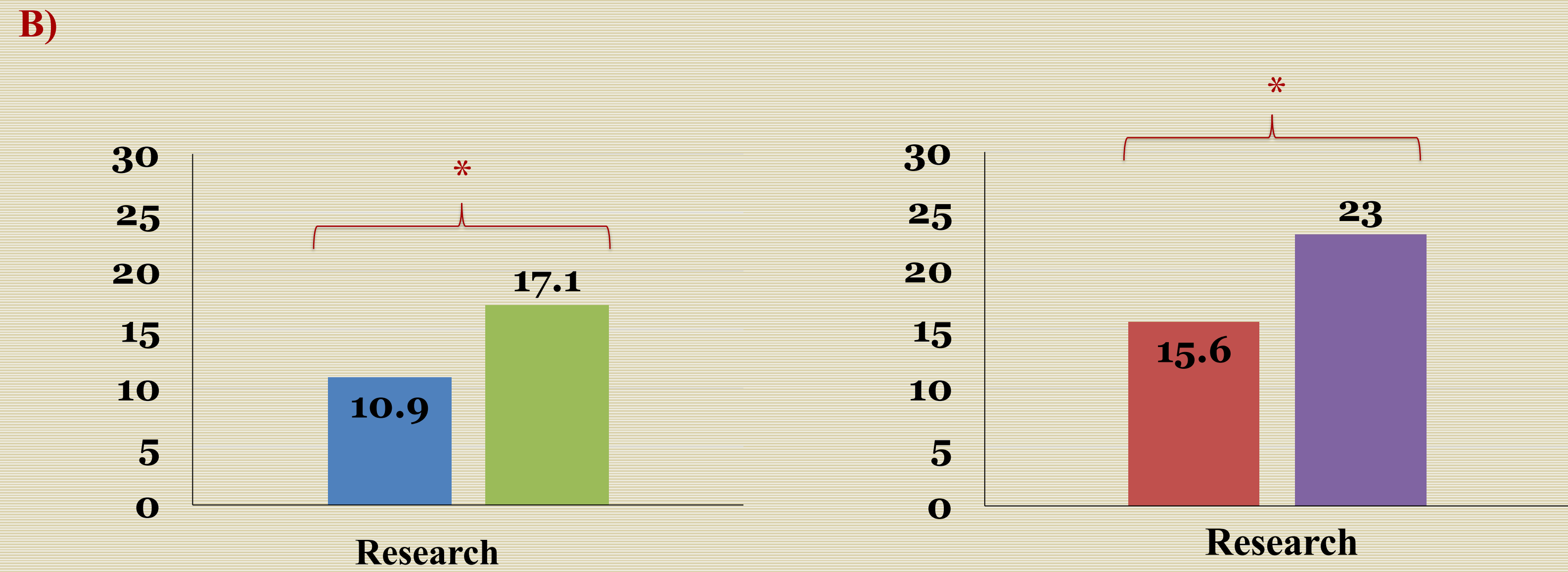
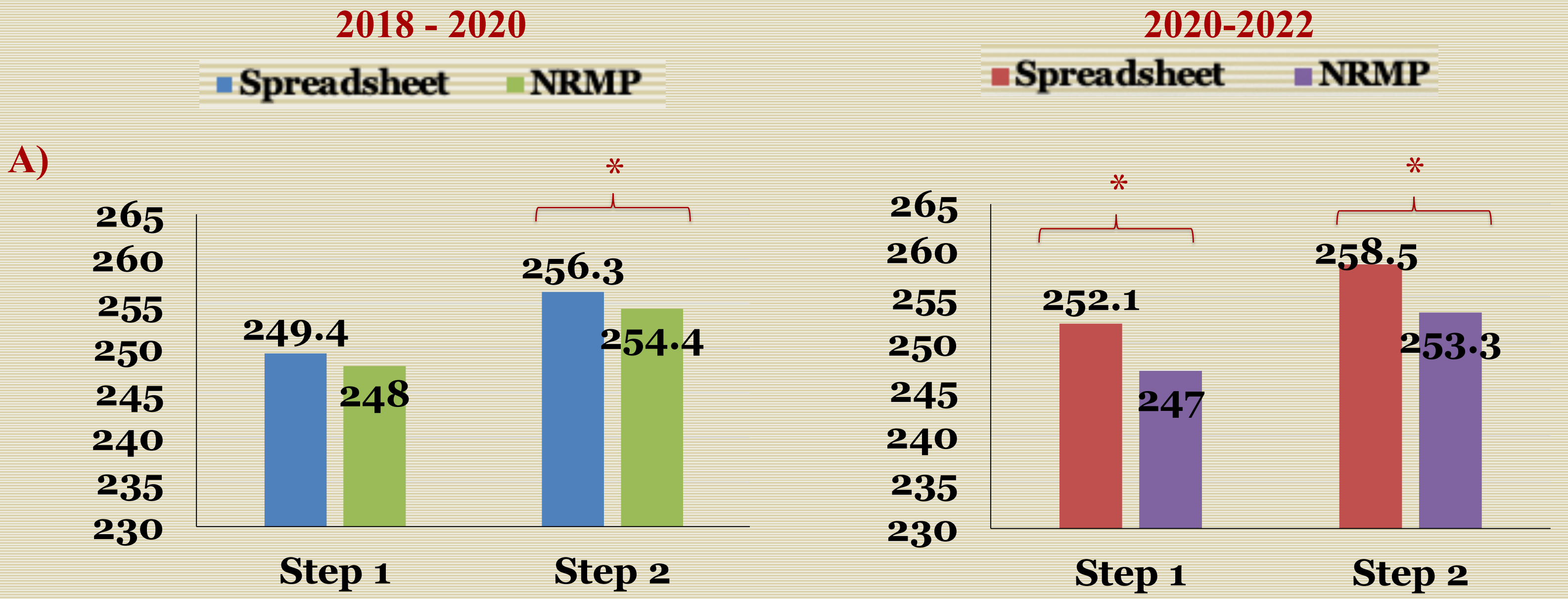


Figure 2. Comparison of A) USMLE Scores, B) Mean Number of Abstracts, Presentations, and Publications, and C) Interviews Attended by Spreadsheet Users Versus NRMP Applicants. * denotes $p < 0.05$.

CONCLUSIONS

- The online ‘Plastic Surgery Match’ spreadsheet may aid applicants aiming to learn more about attributes of successful applicants and programs in the virtual era, but this may not be reflective or inclusive of the entire applicant pool.
- Despite the anonymity provided by this platform, applicants may still be hesitant to share unsuccessful matches or negative reviews of programs.
- Applicants are using the chat feature to ask about residency programs and learn more about the plastic surgery application process.

REFERENCES

- Charting Outcomes in the Match: Senior Students of U.S. MD Medical Schools: The National Resident Matching Program; 2020.
- Charting Outcomes in the Match: Senior Students of U.S. MD Medical Schools: The National Resident Matching Program; 2022.
- Plastics Match 2018-19. Google Sheets. <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1PfQYQU2e5TiYg02uTYmfqUdL4aFIdWWexmlV9lKUKL8/edit#gid=179390311>. Last Accessed: April 23, 2023.
- Plastics Match 2019-2020. Google Sheets. <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Tv2Z2wPnnsIAiI4McyMYGqQ4ehh81E34gmbMgxJWu3c/edit#gid=352652918>. Last Accessed: April 23, 2023.
- Plastics Match 2020-2021. Google Sheets. <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1i7Cl7PiZKxEf17iMmFq94z8jzowEkShzchznRZkg6cA/edit#gid=1933103978>. Last Accessed: April 23, 2023.
- Plastics Match 2021-2022. Google Sheets. <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/16QMBSaa--uCdBxGG5BmhainCiT-EOsc9K39cFFDWkq/edit#gid=1933103978>. Last Accessed: April 23, 2023.