Predictors of Ophthalmology Career Success (POCS) Study

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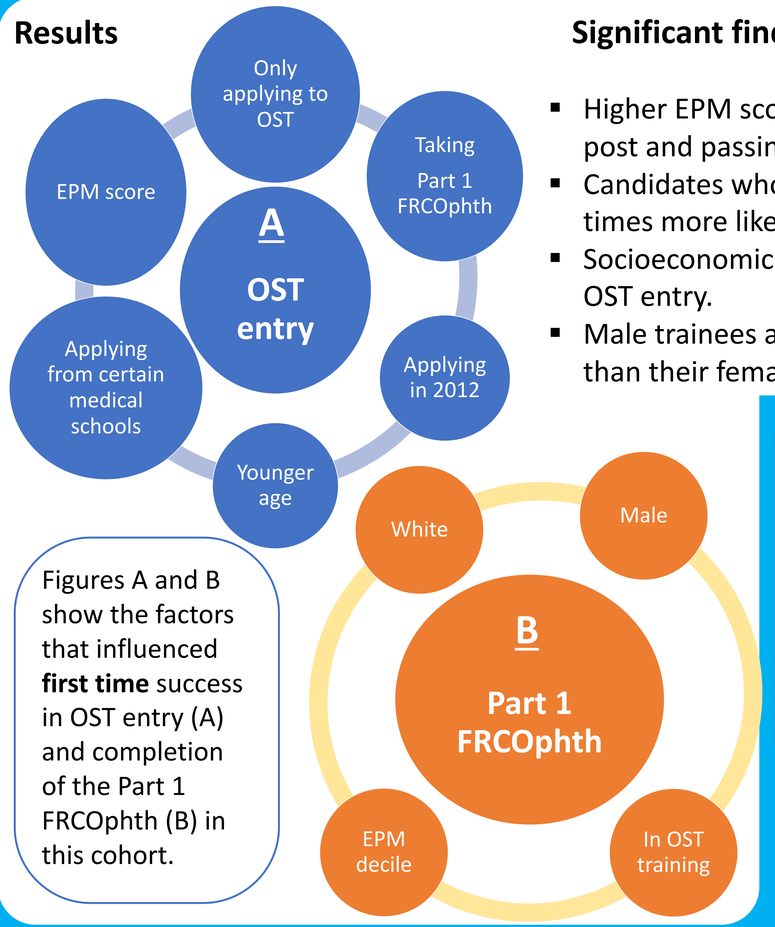
Introduction: Ophthalmology is the busiest outpatient specialty in the UK. Demand for trainee ophthalmologists is expected to rise in coming years. Our aim was to understand what determines success in ophthalmology training, in order to inform future ophthalmologists, refine recruitment and facilitate workforce planning.

Objectives: To explore the factors that lead to success in securing an ophthalmology specialty training (OST) post and passing the FRCOphth part 1, each on first attempt.

Methods: This was a retrospective longitudinal cohort study using routinely collected data available from UKMED[1]. UKMED is a medical education research database that collates data on UK medical students and trainee doctors, in order to map the path of doctors through school, university and their long-term career [2].
We analysed data of 1350 doctors who applied for OST between 2012 and 2018, and that of 495 candidates who had attempted Part 1 FRCOphth between 2013 and 2018.

Variables of interest were identified by univariate analysis and included: socioeconomic and demographic details (sex, gender, ethnicity, index of multiple deprivation quintile), education performance measure (EPM) , exam relative to application and whether candidates applied only for OST. Multivariate logistic regression was applied to variables of statistical significance ($p<0.05$).

Results



Figures A and B show the factors that influenced **first time** success in OST entry (A) and completion of the Part 1 FRCOphth (B) in this cohort.

Significant findings

- Higher EPM scores at medical school are strongly predictive in securing an OST post and passing the Part 1 FRCOphth on first attempt ($p<0.001$).
- Candidates who take the FRCOphth part 1 prior to their ST1 application are 2.6 times more likely to get a place on OST on first attempt.
- Socioeconomic factors, gender and ethnicity do not influence success in first time OST entry.
- Male trainees are 2.5 times more likely to pass FRCOphth part 1 on first attempt than their female counterparts.

Discussion: This pilot study identified factors that predict success in gaining OST entry and passing FRCOphth part 1 on first attempt. UKMED refreshes data annually; each year that this data analysis is repeated, the numbers of candidates analysed will expand. Future studies will aim track this cohort through the refraction certificate and part 2 FRCOphth. We can also monitor annual review of competency progression (ARCP) outcomes and see which trainees take longer to complete their training. UKMED data can also be linked to national training survey (NTS) data to understand the quality of OST training.

References

1. Hingorani, M. and J. Harcourt. *The Royal College of Ophthalmologists (RCOphth) Workforce Census 2018*. 2018 [cited 2020 28/06/20]; Available from: https://www.rcophth.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/rcophth-Workforce-Census-2018.pdf
2. UKMED. See https://www.ukmed.ac.uk
3. Dowell, J., et al., *The UK medical education database (UKMED) what is it? Why and how might you use it?* BMC Medical Education, 2018. **18**(1): p. 6.