

## Reply to the Letter to the Editor: How Do Medical Students Perceive Diversity in Orthopaedic Surgery, and How Do Their Perceptions Change After an Orthopaedic Clinical Rotation?

Rafa Rahman MPH<sup>1</sup>, Bo Zhang MD<sup>2</sup>, Casey Jo Humbyrd MD, MBE<sup>3</sup>, Dawn LaPorte MD<sup>2</sup>

*To the Editor,*

We appreciate the comments from Aggarwal et al. on our recent study exploring medical student perceptions of diversity and inclusion in orthopaedics [8]. We would like to clarify that our study does not directly evaluate “underrepresentation and underappreciation of women in orthopaedics” and where these things may be perpetuated, as your letter suggests. Rather, we explore how

students of multiple underrepresented backgrounds perceive diversity in the field and what the role of a clinical rotation may be in changing these perceptions.

Still, we agree that substantial steps need to be taken to remedy the gaps in diversity that exist and that previous reports and studies have demonstrated in terms of gender and race/ethnicity [1-3, 6]. To this end, our study was motivated by a desire to understand what medical students’ perceptions of the field were and whether increased exposure to the field might be one way to improve any negative perceptions. Based on our findings, we theorize that clinical rotations may serve as a way to encourage a more diverse applicant pool. Furthermore, we agree that it is important to identify the relevant stakeholders who may be positioned to enact the appropriate changes. This includes but is not limited to medical schools,

residency programs, and the broader organizations in medical education.

As Aggarwal et al. aptly point out, not all students will have the same experience during an orthopaedic rotation. While we saw the rotation as having a positive impact on perceptions of diversity in the field on average among students, this certainly will not be the case for everyone. For this reason and others, a clinical rotation is but one of many strategies that will need to be employed to address lack of diversity. Other areas to focus on include the resident selection process [7], diversity of faculty in the department, structured and informal mentorship [5], and ensuring an inclusive environment [4].

We also thank the authors for highlighting the added challenges that individuals with intersectional identities may face. While our study did not have the sufficient sample size to explore this population, future research should seek to understand this experience, as well as the experience of sexual orientation minorities in the field.

We are glad that our study has garnered your interest and enthusiasm, and we look forward to the important work that can be accomplished on this topic moving forward. Thank you for your time in sharing your thoughts and support.

---

(RE: Aggarwal A, Panayi AC, Lorello GR, Silver JK. Letter to the Editor: How Do Medical Students Perceive Diversity in Orthopaedic Surgery, and How Do Their Perceptions Change After an Orthopaedic Clinical Rotation? *Clin Orthop Relat Res*. 2021;479:1626-1627.)

The authors certify that neither they, nor any members of their immediate families, have any commercial associations (consultancies, stock ownership, equity interest, patent/licensing arrangements, etc.) that might pose a conflict of interest in connection with the submitted article.

All ICMJE Conflict of Interest Forms for authors and *Clinical Orthopaedics and Related Research*® editors and board members are on file with the publication and can be viewed on request.

The opinions expressed are those of the writers, and do not reflect the opinion or policy of *CORR*® or The Association of Bone and Joint Surgeons®.

D. LaPorte ✉, Department of Orthopaedic Surgery, Johns Hopkins Hospital, 1800 Orleans St, Baltimore, MD 21287 USA, Email: dlaport1@jhmi.edu

---

<sup>1</sup>Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, Baltimore, MD, USA

<sup>2</sup>Department of Orthopaedic Surgery, Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore, MD, USA

<sup>3</sup>Chief, Penn Orthopaedics Foot and Ankle Service, The Hospitals of the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA, USA

**Letter to the Editor****References**

1. American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons Department of Clinical Quality and Value. Orthopaedic practice in the U.S. 2018. Available at: <https://www.aaos.org/quality/practice-management/aaos-orthopaedic-surgeon-census/>. Accessed June 10, 2020.
2. Association of American Medical Colleges. 2019 Fall applicant, matriculant, and enrollment data tables. Available at: [https://www.aamc.org/system/files/2019-12/2019%20AAMC%20Fall%20Applicant%2C%20Matriculant%2C%20and%20Enrollment%20Data%20Tables\\_0.pdf](https://www.aamc.org/system/files/2019-12/2019%20AAMC%20Fall%20Applicant%2C%20Matriculant%2C%20and%20Enrollment%20Data%20Tables_0.pdf). Accessed April 29, 2020.
3. Brotherton SE, Etzel SI. Graduate medical education, 2018-2019. *JAMA*. 2019;322:996-1016.
4. Leopold SS. Editor's Spotlight/Take 5: How do medical students perceive diversity in orthopaedic surgery, and how do their perceptions change after an orthopaedic clinical rotation? *Clin Orthop Relat Res*. 2021;479:430-433.
5. Leopold SS. Editorial: Fears about #metoo are no excuse to deny mentorship to women in orthopaedic surgery. *Clin Orthop Relat Res*. 2019;477:473-476.
6. Poon S, Kiridly D, Mutawakkil M, et al. Current trends in sex, race, and ethnic diversity in orthopaedic surgery residency. *J Am Acad Orthop Surg*. 2019;27:e725-e733.
7. Poon SC, Nellans K, Gorroochum P, Chahine NO. Race, but not gender, is associated with admissions into orthopaedic residency programs. *Clin Orthop Relat Res*. Published online December 3, 2020. DOI: [10.1097/CORR.0000000000001553](https://doi.org/10.1097/CORR.0000000000001553).
8. Rahman R, Zhang B, Humbyrd CJ, LaPorte D. How do medical students perceive diversity in orthopaedic surgery, and how do their perceptions change after an orthopaedic clinical rotation? *Clin Orthop Relat Res*. 2021;479:434-444.