

**FATE OF NON-DESIGNATED PRELIMINARY GENERAL SURGERY RESIDENTS SEEKING A CATEGORICAL RESIDENCY POSITION**

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**BACKGROUND:** As pyramidal programs in general surgery were eliminated in recent decades, non-designated preliminary surgery (NDPS) positions were introduced to fill vacant positions. Graduating medical students can pursue an NDPS position with the goal of obtaining a categorical position in either a general surgery residency or in another field altogether. The fate of residents who complete two years as NDPS residents remains ill-defined.

**METHODS:** From 1995 to 2008, data concerning NDPS residents was prospectively collected from two general surgery training programs. Trainees were followed by prospectively gathered data, internet identification and internal records of hospital privileging.

**RESULTS:** 110 graduating medical students initiated post-graduate training as NDPS residents; 74 (67%) were males, 36 females (33%); 98 (90%) were international medical graduates. Among all 110 subjects, 95/110 (86%) were hired as PGY-1 NDPS and 15/110 (14%) were hired as PGY-2 NDPS. 15/110 (14%) left postgraduate medical education. 25/110 (23%) initial PGY-1 NDPS residents pursued a non-surgical specialty (anesthesiology, radiology, internal medicine, family medicine or dermatology) after their internship. 43/110 (39%) eventually matriculated as a categorical general surgical resident; 20/43 (47%) became categorical residents in their initial NDPS program. All 20 NDPS residents who matriculated as a categorical resident into their initial NDPS program are board certified.

**CONCLUSIONS:** More than one third of NDPS residents successfully obtain a categorical general surgery position. Only a small fraction (14%) fail to continue in post-graduate medical education. The NDPS positions allow most candidates a successful career path. The persistent rate of attrition among categorical surgical residents allows for NDPS residents to join categorical training programs and become eligible for Board certification in general surgery.