



Attitudes and Perceptions of Neurology Residents to Neuro-Ophthalmology



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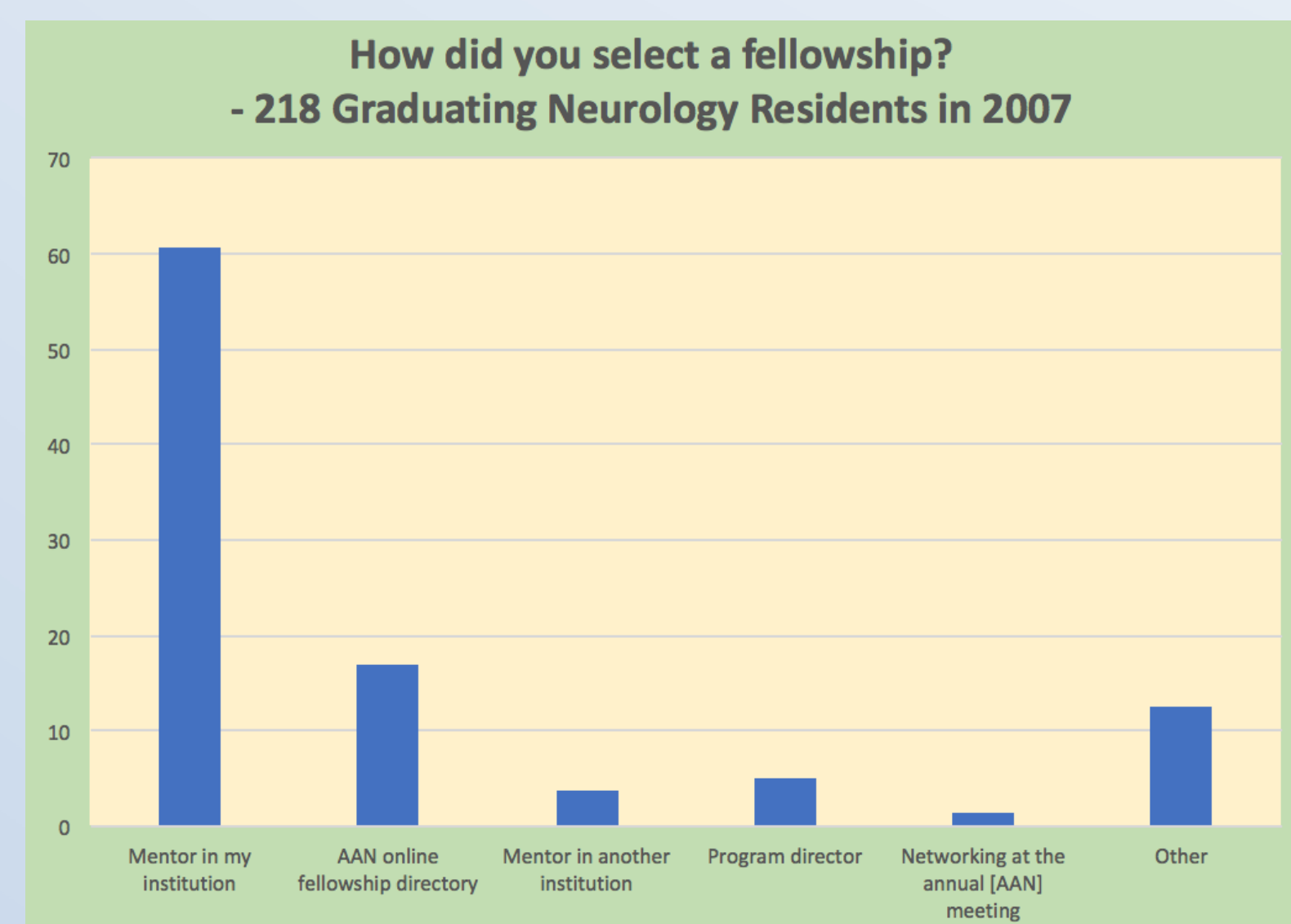
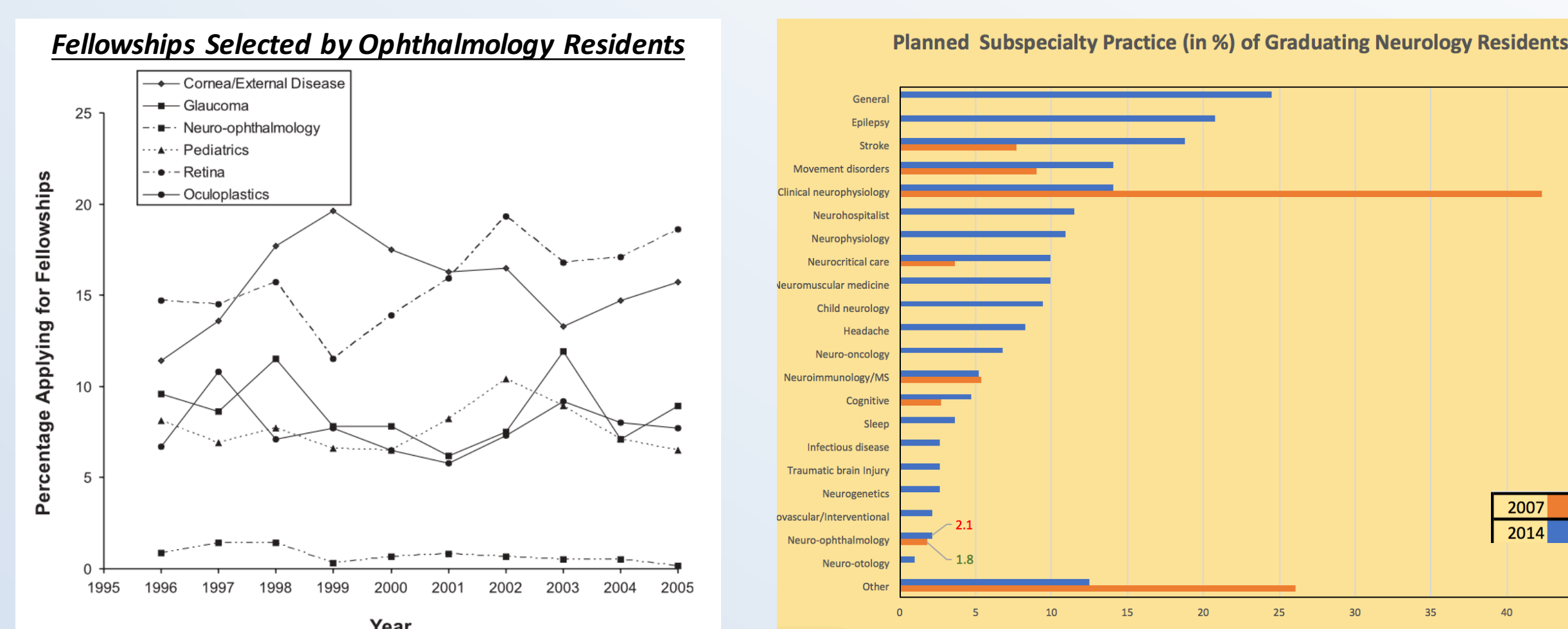
OBJECTIVE

- To identify factors associated with the choice of fellowship subspecialties among graduating neurology residents
- To explore the perceptions of neurology residents regarding a career in neuro-ophthalmology

BACKGROUND

Neuro-ophthalmology is the practice of diagnosing and managing visual problems of neurologic origin.

Very few ophthalmology and neurology residents choose to pursue fellowship training in neuro-ophthalmology.



Ophthalmology residency training includes medical and surgical management of problems involving the eyeball and orbits, exclusive of the optic nerves and visual pathways that lie beyond.

Neurology residency training includes diagnosis and management of problems arising from the brain, spinal cord and peripheral motor and sensory systems.

The average ophthalmologist and neurologist often feel inadequately prepared to diagnose and manage visual problems of neurologic origin.

METHODS

Survey development

- Literature review regarding fellowship choice among neurology and ophthalmology residents
- Discussion with neurology faculty and program directors
- Generation of initial survey questions
- Pilot test the survey
- Refinement of survey questions

Survey

- Created and distributed online using Qualtrics (Yale)

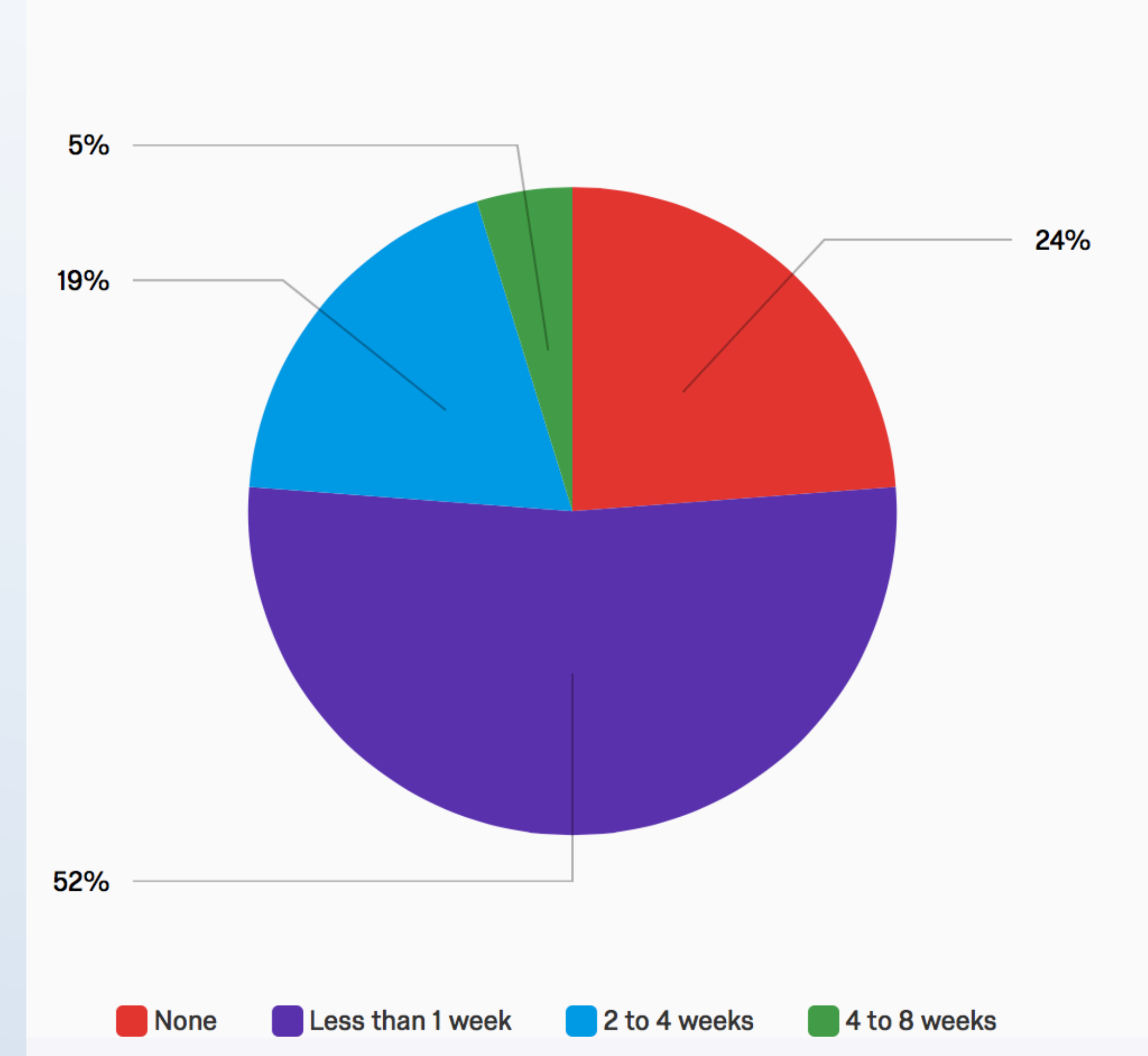
Sample

- 15 residents - 6 PGY-3 and 9 PGY-4
- 6 fellows (graduated residency 2016)

RESULTS

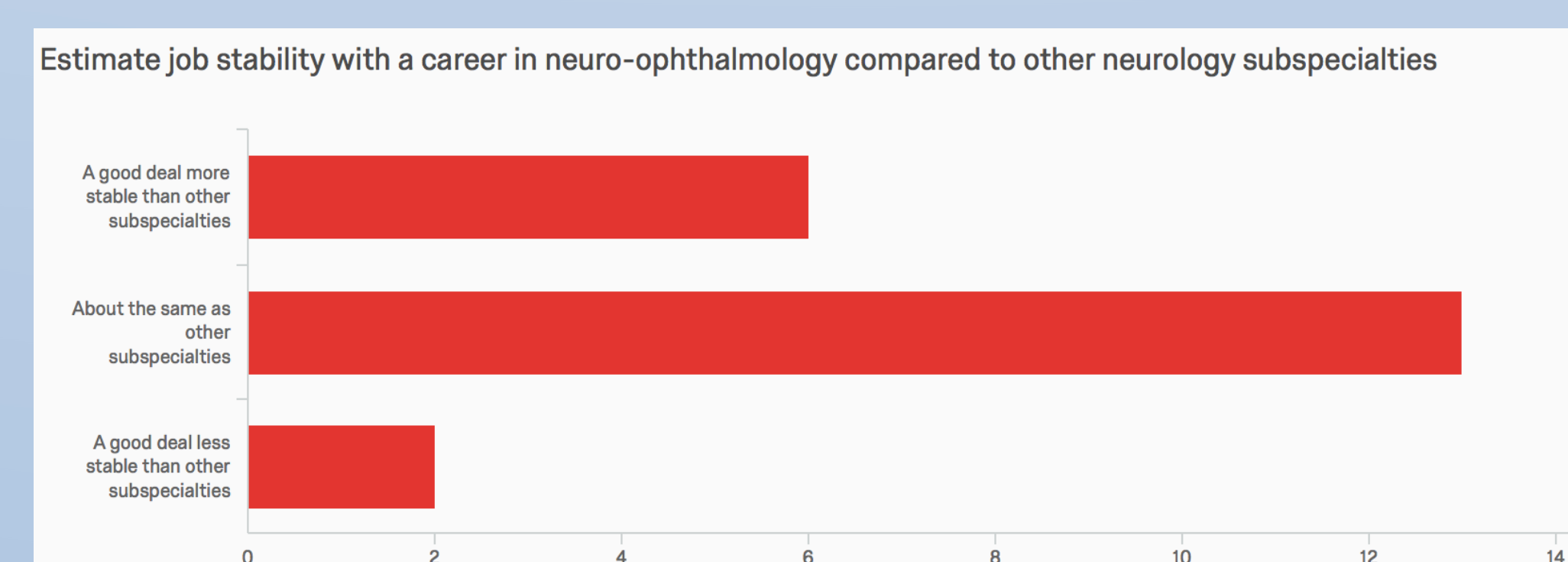
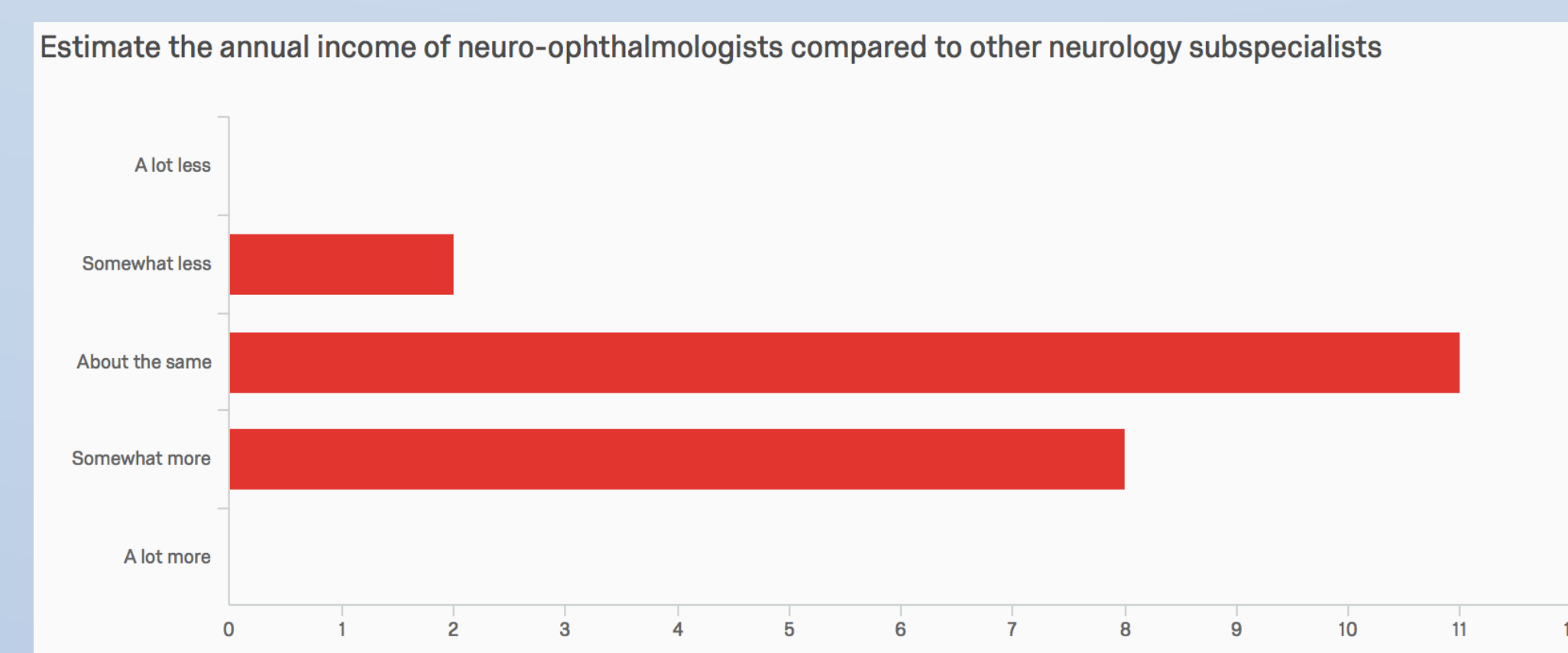
- All residents and fellows reported that the value of the neuro-ophthalmologist for resident education and patient care was either very important or extremely important.
- 15 of 21 (71%) said that neuro-ophthalmology was more difficult than other neurology subspecialties.
- They identified the following issues as contributors to difficulty in the subspecialty:
 - Limited exposure (95%)
 - Not enough teaching (90.5%)
 - Ocular fundus examination (90.5%)
 - Complex diagnoses (90.5%)
- However, the following table indicates that very few residents selected neuro-ophthalmology as a rotation:

How much time did you spend on your neuro-ophthalmology rotation?



- 19 of 21 (90.5%) reported that a role model was important in their choice of a fellowship
- 13 of 15 (86.7%) said they would need more exposure to consider pursuing neuro-ophthalmology fellowship.
- 15 of 21 (71%) said that they would seek consultation by a neuro-ophthalmologist when they encounter patients with neuro-ophthalmic problems in their post-training practice.

Perceived job stability and salary:



CONCLUSIONS

Neurology residents:

- Perceive that neuro-ophthalmology is more difficult compared with other neurology subspecialties, all expressed because of limited exposure to the field and apprehension about ophthalmoscopy.
- Identify the influence of a role model/mentor as a major determining factor for fellowship selection.
- Perceive that the job market and compensation for neuro-ophthalmologists was favorable compared with other neurology subspecialties but even this is not sufficient to overcome the barriers that prevent entry into the field.
- Identified lack of exposure to the field as the major reason for not considering a career in the field. Most (75%) spend less than one week rotating in neuro-ophthalmology during their entire residency.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- Explore whether mandatory neuro-ophthalmology rotations will increase residents going into the field and address workforce shortages.

Future studies could include:

- Conducting the same survey nationally among neurology residents
- Conducting a modified survey for ophthalmology residents across the US
- Conducting a national survey for board certified neurologists and ophthalmologists greater than five years out of training to assess perceptions about neuro-ophthalmology education during residency training



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