

# Trainee demographics tied to passage of U.S. surgical boards

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(HealthDay)—Resident race, ethnicity, sex, and family status at

internship are associated with surgical board passage rates in the United States, according to a study published online Oct. 16 in *JAMA Surgery*.

Heather L. Yeo, M.D., from New York-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medicine in New York City, and colleagues evaluated whether [trainee](#) sociodemographic factors are associated with passage rates for American Board of Surgery board certification. Categorical general [surgery](#) trainees (starting in 2007 to 2008) were surveyed and followed through 2016.

Based on the 662 examinees with complete data, the researchers report that 65 percent were men and 69 percent were white. Overall board passage was 87 percent. Compared with those who passed both the written qualifying examination and the oral certifying examination, trainees of Hispanic ethnicity were more likely to not attempt the examinations than non-Hispanic trainees (odds ratio [OR], 4.7). Examinees who were married without children (OR, 0.3) or were single (OR, 0.4) were less likely to fail the examinations compared with examinees who were married with children during their internship. White examinees were more likely to pass the qualifying examination on the first try (OR, 1.8) compared with nonwhite examinees (black individuals, Asian individuals, and individuals of other races).

"The American Board of Surgery already has begun addressing the potential for unconscious bias among board examiners by increasing diversity and adding implicit bias training," the authors write.

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