

Educational debt of pediatric residents increasing

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Mary Pat Frintner, M.S.P.H., from the American Academy of Pediatrics in Elk Grove Village, Ill., and colleagues surveyed annual national random samples of 1,000 graduating pediatric residents (response rate, 61 percent) from 2006 through 2010 to examine current levels of educational [debt](#) and the [correlation](#) between educational debt and career intentions.

The researchers found that three-quarters of residents reported having educational debt. Among all residents, the mean debt (including spouse's debt if married) increased 34 percent over the study period (from

\$104,000 to \$139,000). Among those who reported having any debt, there was a 24 percent increase in the mean debt, from \$146,000 in 2006 to \$181,000 in 2010. Debt level was an [independent predictor](#) of practice goal in multivariable analysis. Compared to residents with low debt, those with medium and high debt had significantly increased odds of having a practice goal that did not require additional fellowship training (adjusted odds ratios, 1.46 and 1.51, respectively). Other factors also had an independent impact on career choice.

"Educational debt among graduating pediatric residents is high and continues to increase," the authors write. "This study finds that a higher educational debt load is one factor that may push residents toward [primary care](#) or hospitalist practice, rather than pursuing fellowship training and a subspecialist career."

More information: [Abstract](#)
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