

Emergency room culture may deter medical students from selecting specialty

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In a new UCLA Health study, 25 medical students pursuing emergency medicine were interviewed about their experiences working in an emergency room during clinical rotations.

Four themes were identified in their answers: watching difficult interactions between patient and care team and among the care team was distressing; women participants found that culture to be exclusionary; traits—like assertiveness and self-advocacy—were favored; and access to mentors, representation, and exposure to [environment](#) influenced interest towards the specialty.

Most of the medical students interviewed—21 of the 25—planned on applying to an emergency medicine residency. However, they said it remains a challenge to adopt emergency medicine norms based on the type of environment they experienced.

Emergency medicine is experiencing a decline in interest among graduating medical students, and women continue to be underrepresented in the field.

Part of joining a [medical specialty](#) is assimilating to the established [culture](#) of characteristics and norms. The researchers aimed to assess students' experiences working in the emergency room and how those experiences influenced the selection of specialty.

The study authors interviewed 25 [medical students](#) about their experiences in the emergency room. They used a constructivist grounded theory approach, meaning they gathered and synthesized answers instead of testing a preconceived idea.

The students needed to have completed an emergency medicine rotation

and considered pursuing [emergency medicine](#). They were selected from across the country.

The emergency room environment may dissuade students from pursuing that specialty which would impact diversifying the specialty.

The research is [published](#) in the journal *AEM Education and Training*.

More information: Rosemarie Diaz et al, Understanding clerkship experiences in emergency medicine and their potential influence on specialty selection: A qualitative study, *AEM Education and Training* (2024). [DOI: 10.1002/aet2.10932](https://doi.org/10.1002/aet2.10932)

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