

# Medical Student Involvement in National Otolaryngology Organizations

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EXCEPTIONAL CARE. WITHOUT EXCEPTION.

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## INTRODUCTION

- Choosing a specialty is an important milestone that every medical student will face.
- Specialty selection has consistently shown to be one of the most stressful components of a medical student's education.<sup>1</sup>
- Students with early and ample exposure to a field are more likely to make informed career decisions.<sup>2</sup>
- Data suggests medical schools currently do not provide adequate exposure to Otolaryngology.<sup>3</sup>
- **Purpose:** evaluate the involvement opportunities for medical students to be involved in national otolaryngology organizations.

## METHODS

Websites, brochures, and bylaws of 24 national otolaryngology-related specialty and subspecialty societies were independently reviewed by two authors (KW and AG) for the following medical student opportunities:

- Student membership
- Membership costs
- Leadership opportunities
- Service opportunities
- Ability to attend national conferences
- Conference registration fees
- Presence of research scholarships
- Presence of travel scholarships

Fischer's exact test ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) was utilized to compare involvement opportunities between general and subspecialty societies.

## RESULTS

### Student Membership and Networking

- 9 organizations (37.5%) offered students membership; 6 charged a membership fee (mean=\$73, range from \$35 to \$120).
- 3 organizations offered free membership
- Student membership was restricted to "candidate" or associate status for 7 organizations (77.7%, [7/9]).
- Two organizations offered full membership.
- Most organizations also allowed students to attend national conferences (95.8%, [23/24]); nineteen (79.2%) allowed students to present research at conferences.

### Student Policy Involvement

- One organization allowed student members to vote on policy issues.
- One society allowed student members to endorse candidates for society membership.
- 3 three organizations provided students with service opportunities.

### Student Grants and Scholarships

- 3 organizations (12.5 %) offered travel funding.
- 7 organizations (29.2%) provided funded scholarship opportunities to medical students.

Subspecialty societies were more likely to provide students with the opportunity to present research, ( $p=0.001$ ). In other areas, general and subspecialty societies provided comparable levels of involvement opportunities.

## DISCUSSION

Early and ample exposure to given specialty allows students to gain insight into the profession and decide if it is a right fit. Currently, medical schools may not provide adequate student exposure to otolaryngology. Only one-third of U.S. medical schools have a required OHNS rotation and 5% offer no clinical otolaryngology exposure at all.<sup>4</sup>

Inadequate otolaryngology education can increase the risk for the **misdiagnosis, mismanagement, and poor healthcare utilization** when students are faced with ear, nose, or throat-related illnesses in their future careers. For students interested in OHNS, a lack of exposure may also limit their ability to decide if the specialty is the correct career choice.

National otolaryngology organizations and subspecialty societies have a unique opportunity to provide students with their own involvement opportunities. Our results show that many opportunities exist for students to attend conferences and present research, however fewer options exist are available in leadership, service, and other scholarly activities. Financial limitations by way of registration fees, annual dues, and a lack of funding support may also preclude some students from opportunities.

## CONCLUSION

- This is the first comprehensive review of involvement opportunities available to medical students in national otolaryngology organizations.
- Opportunities exist for students interested in attending conferences and presenting research.
- Few options exist for students interested in leadership, service, and other activities.
- These findings were consistent across both general and subspecialty societies.

## LIMITATIONS

Only national otolaryngology-related organizations were evaluated in this study. Therefore, results cannot be generalized to describe otolaryngology opportunities at the state or local level.

## REFERENCES

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	General n=8	Subspecialty n=16	Membership n=9	No Membership n=15
<b>Membership</b>	2 (25%)	7 (44%)	-	-
<b>Conference Attendance</b>	8 (100%)	15 (94%)	8 (89%)	15 (100%)
<b>Present Research</b>	4 (50%)	15 (94%)	8 (89%)	11 (73%)
<b>Research Scholarship</b>	0 (0%)	7 (44%)	2 (22%)	5 (31%)
<b>Travel Award</b>	2 (25%)	4 (25%)	3 (33%)	3 (20%)

**Table 1.**

Comparison of student opportunities based on: (1) scope of the organization and (2) student membership. Subspecialty societies were significantly more likely to provide students with the opportunity to present research ( $p=0.001$ ). In all other areas, general and subspecialty societies provided comparable levels of involvement opportunities for medical students.

### National Otolaryngology Organization

Acoustical Society of America	American Rhinologic Society
American Academy of Audiology	American Society of Pediatric Otolaryngology
American Academy of Facial Plastics and Reconstruction Surgery	American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
American Academy of Otolaryngic Allergy	Association for Research in Otolaryngology*
American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery*	Association of Academic Departments of Otolaryngology*
American Auditory Society	Association of Otolaryngology Administrators*
American Broncho-Esophagological Association	North American Skull Base Society
American Head and Neck Society	North American Society of Head and Neck Pathology*
American Laryngological Association	Sir Charles Bell Society
American Neurotology Society	Society for Ear, Nose, and Throat Advances in Children
American Osteopathic Colleges of Ophthalmology & Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery*	Society of University Otolaryngologists*
American Otological Society	Triological Society*