

Assessing student interest for a primary care track program within the LSUHSC School of Medicine curriculum

Dorian Joye O'Sullivan¹, Pamela Wiseman, MD,¹
¹Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center, New Orleans, LA



Background

- LSUHSC School of Medicine (LSUHSC SOM) has two programs, the Primary Care Scholars Track and the Rural Scholars Track, designed to support students with early interest in primary care and promote primary care workforce development.¹ These programs include a full or partial tuition waiver in exchange for a service commitment to practice in primary care in Louisiana following graduation.
- Beyond the tuition waiver, there is little curricular programming to support the development of students with early interest in primary care.
- The existing waiver programs can support only small group students and require students to make tough decisions about their futures before they are certain of their career interests.

Objective

- Gather student perspectives on whether there is sufficient interest among students to build a primary care track with no service commitment following graduation, and how such a program could benefit students in general, and help students find and sustain their interest in the primary care specialties throughout medical school.

Methods

- 9-question, internet-based survey, generated by a senior primary care scholar and disseminated to the LSUHSC SOM student body, including FMIG, OBIG, IMIG, and Clinical Skills Club interest groups
- Survey questions included multiple choice and free response prompts which focused on student perspectives on general usefulness of a primary care track program, curricular activities they would value, and influences on their interest in a primary care career.
- Applied thematic analysis for qualitative data

Results

Are you currently interested in one or more of the following primary care specialties: 1. Family Medicine (includes FM/OB) 2. General Pediatrics 3. General Internal Medicine (includes geriatrics)
44 responses

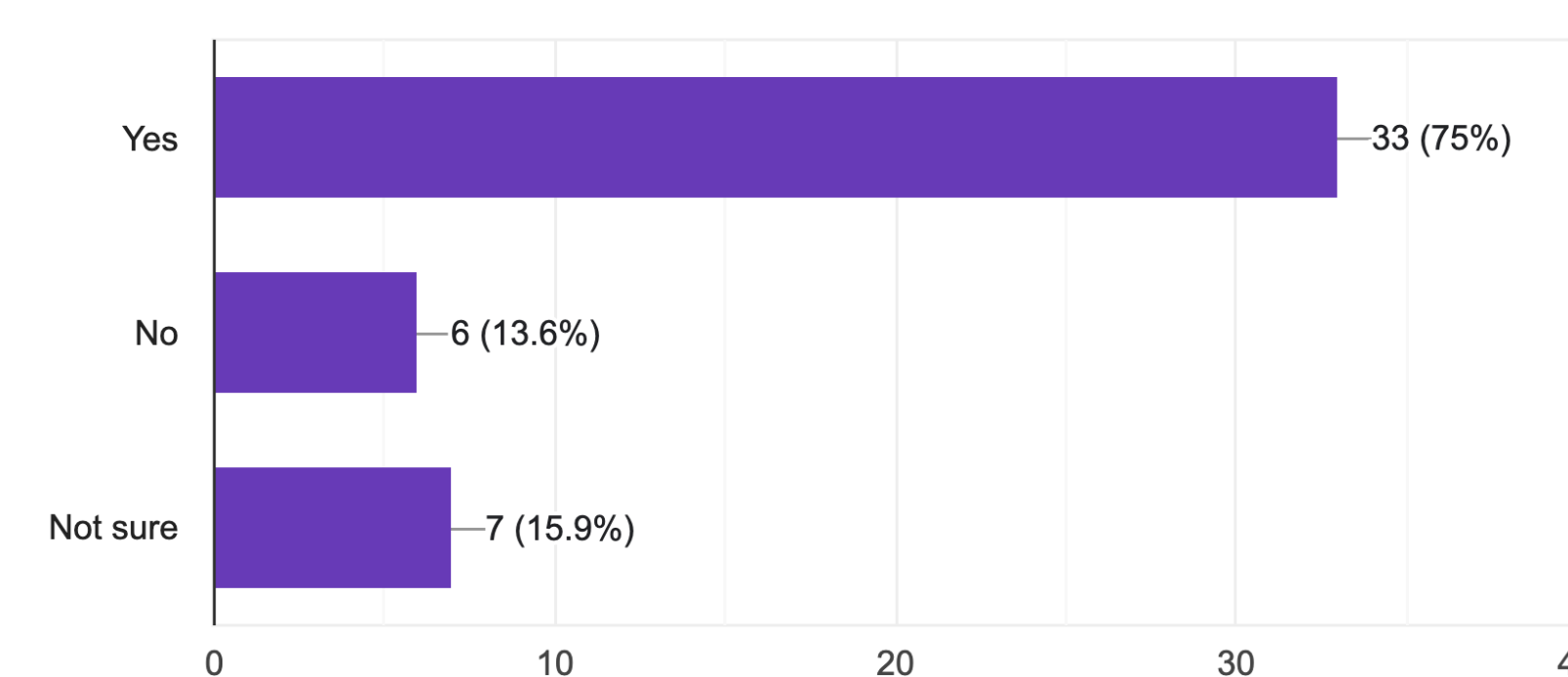


Figure 1

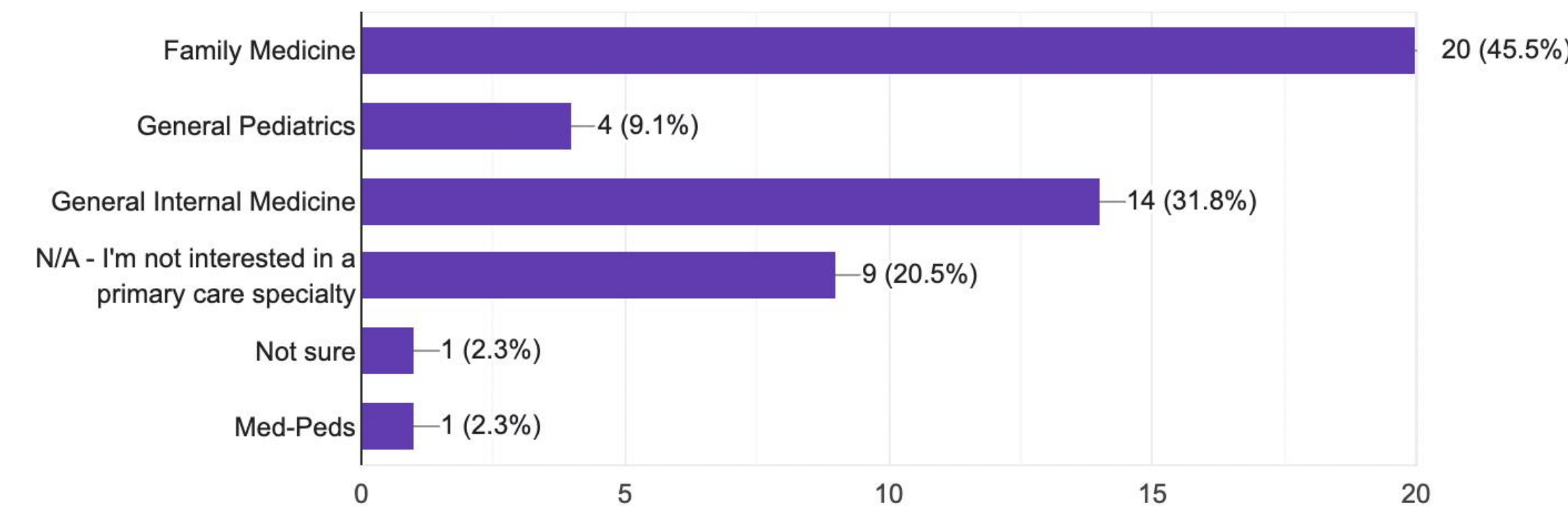


Figure 2

Which of the following activities would be most valuable to have in a primary care track program that you would choose. (Select up to 5)
42 responses

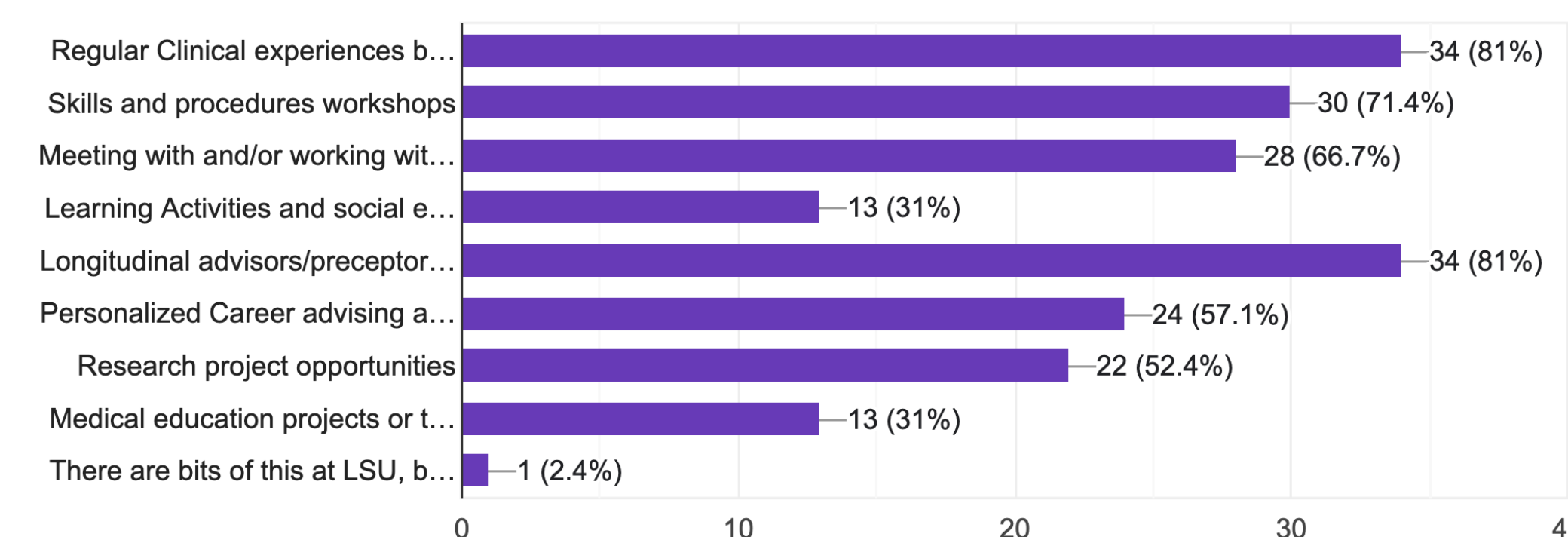


Figure 3

Figure 1: 44 students (22 L1, 14 L2, 7 L3, 1 L4) completed the survey. The majority of responders expressed a current interest in a primary care specialty (n=33, 75%).

Figure 2: The most popular specialty of interest was Family Medicine (n=20, 45.5%).

Figure 3: The most valuable curricular activities were Regular Clinical Experiences beginning in the first year of medical school (81%), Longitudinal mentors/preceptors throughout medical school (81%), and Skills and Procedural workshops (71.4%).

Figures 4: 85.7% of responders felt it was important that the primary care track align with the standard curriculum.

Figure 5: 95.3% of responders would be interested in a longitudinal primary care experience during the third year.

How important is it that primary care track activities align closely with the standard curriculum? E.g. skills workshops integrate anatomy to help students prep for anatomy exams
42 responses

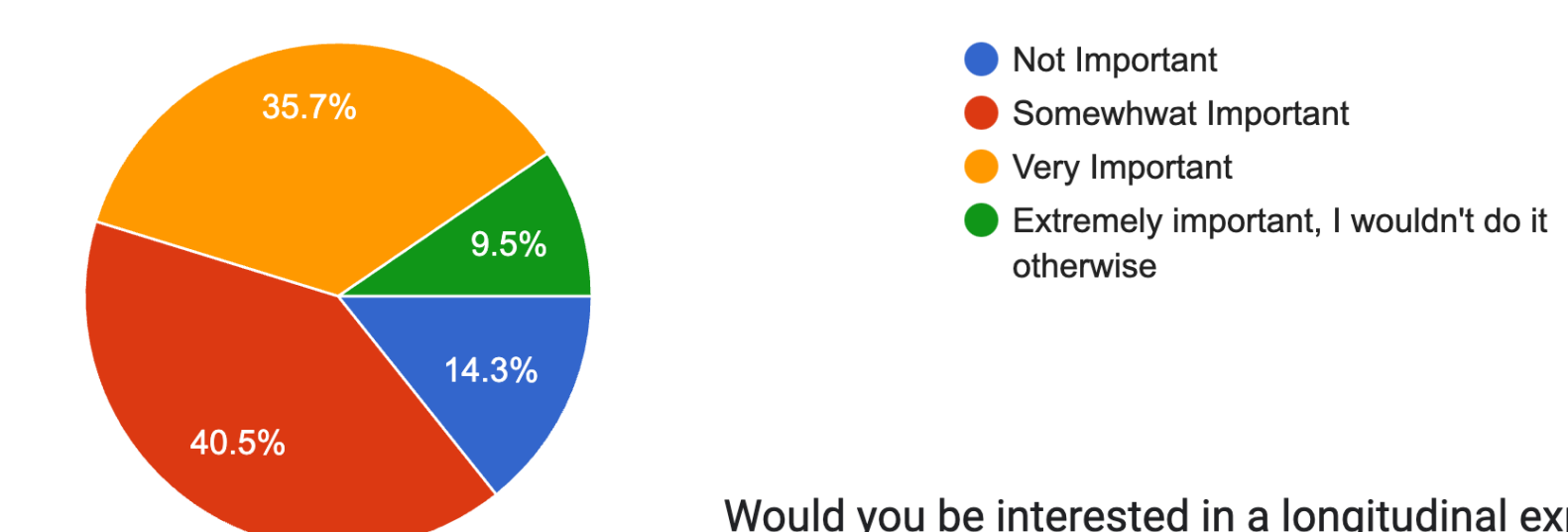


Figure 4

Would you be interested in a longitudinal experience during your third year, such as a half-day in a primary care setting of your choice on every rotation?
42 responses

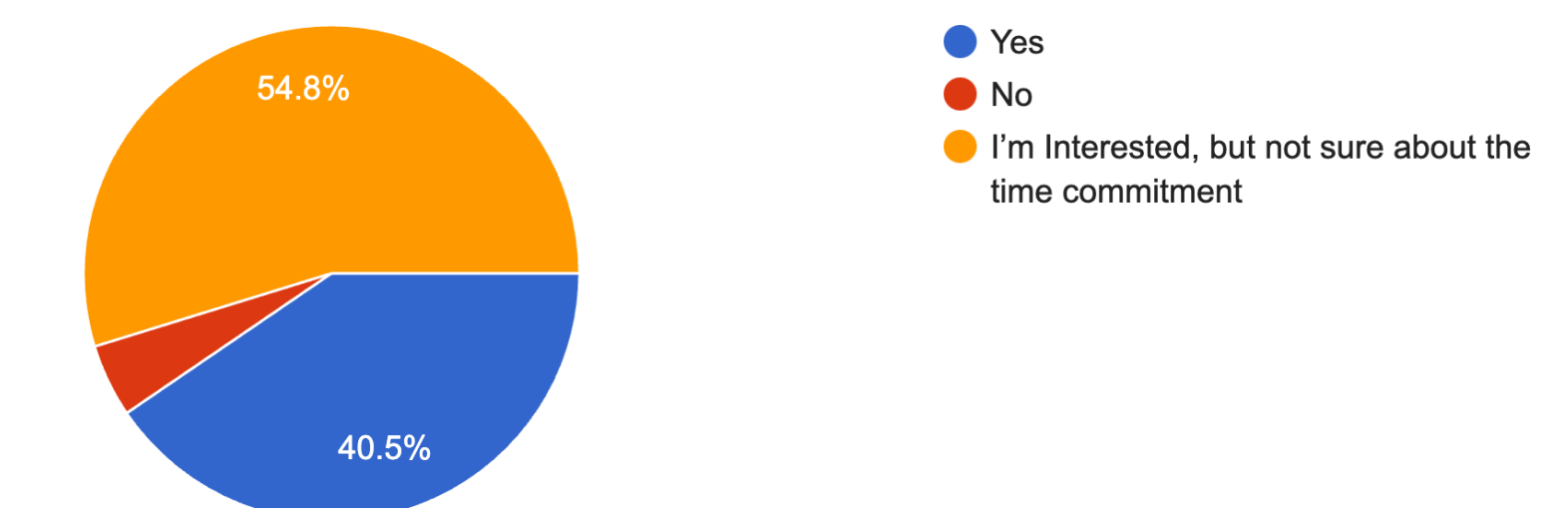


Figure 5

Free Response Themes

- 32 respondents completed 2 free-response questions: 1) What have been the most important influences on your interest in primary care or specialty of choice 2) What do you think might sustain your interest throughout medical school?
- Sustained interest in primary care was most commonly attributed to clinical experiences within primary care and direct interactions with clinicians or mentors in the field.
- Students expressed need for greater exposure to career options within primary care.
- The most commonly cited reasons for hesitancy around entering primary care careers were concerns about financial viability and uncertainty about career options.

Conclusions

A low survey response rate (n=44) limits the utility of the survey to draw significant conclusions about the data. However, the trends that emerged would support additional student surveys or focus groups to support institutional prioritization of implementing a primary care curriculum with high yield activities. A robust primary care track program could be beneficial to medical undergraduates at LSUHSC regardless of specialty.