

Anesthesiology trainees' debt impacts moonlighting, career

3 July 2012



Image courtesy of Blausen Medical

Having high medical school debt increases the likelihood of anesthesiology residents moonlighting and joining practice groups with debt repayment programs, while decreasing their odds of pursuing academic medicine, according to a study published in the July issue of *Anesthesia & Analgesia*.

(HealthDay) -- Having high medical school debt increases the likelihood of anesthesiology residents moonlighting and joining practice groups with debt repayment programs, while decreasing their odds of pursuing academic medicine, according to a study published in the July issue of *Anesthesia & Analgesia*.

Noting that education debt incurred by U.S. medical school graduates has reached a mean of \$158,000, Jeffrey W. Steiner, D.O., from the UT Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas, and colleagues conducted a Web-based survey of anesthesiology interns, residents, and fellows to assess the impact of debt on their moonlighting activities, future career plans, and choice of employer.

The researchers found that, of the 537 survey respondents, those with a one-category-larger amount of medical school debt had a 7 percent increase in the odds of wanting to moonlight and a 7 percent decrease in the odds of choosing a career in an academic faculty. Having larger amounts of [medical school](#) debt also correlated with increased interest in an anesthesiology group

with an education debt repayment program (odds ratio, 1.3 for a one-category increase in the debt amount). For those with more than \$150,000 in debt, these odds increased to 4.6 when compared to those without debt.

"In an effort to compete with private practice anesthesiology groups and to reduce the impact of debt on future career choices of residents/fellows, academic [anesthesiology](#) groups would do well to (1) promote moonlighting activities that are within the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education and institutional guidelines, (2) develop financial curriculum for residents/fellows, and (3) offer [debt](#) repayment programs as an incentive for new faculty to join [academic medicine](#)," the authors write.

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APA citation: Anesthesiology trainees' debt impacts moonlighting, career (2012, July 3) retrieved 28 August 2022 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2012-07-anesthesiology-trainees-debt-impacts-moonlighting.html>

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