

# High rate of career satisfaction for thoracic surgeons

14 September 2016



graduation from medical school. Cumulative educational debt averaged \$62,815. Twenty-six percent of surgeons reported a decrease in operative volume over the past 12 months. Overall, 43.8 percent reported planning to retire between ages 66 and 70 years.

"These data provide a current, detailed profile of the specialty," Ikonomidis writes. "Ongoing challenges remain length of training and educational debt."

**More information:** [Full Text \(subscription or payment may be required\)](#)

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(HealthDay)—Cardiothoracic surgeons report a very high level of job satisfaction, according to survey results published online Sept. 13 in the *Annals of Thoracic Surgery*.

John S. Ikonomidis, M.D., Ph.D., from the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston, assessed responses for a 63-question survey instrument that was administered to 4,343 surgeon members of the Society of Thoracic Surgeons. The return rate was 29.1 percent. The survey indicated that 73 percent of practicing surgeons are either satisfied, very satisfied, or extremely satisfied with their current career. This compared to 72 percent in a previous 2009 study.

In addition, Ikonomidis found that the median age of active thoracic surgeons in the United States was 54 years, and 6.9 percent of the responders were women (6.3 percent of adult cardiac, 6.1 percent of congenital heart, and 11.8 percent of general [thoracic surgeons](#)). Most residents had a mean of 8.7 years of residency training after

APA citation: High rate of career satisfaction for thoracic surgeons (2016, September 14) retrieved 28 June 2022 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2016-09-high-career-satisfaction-thoracic-surgeons.html>

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