

US Physician and Surgeon Perspectives on Board Certification

A Voluntary Internet-based Survey from January 21, 2018 – 19 March 2018

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Conflicts of Interest

- Dr. Fisher has no financial conflicts of interest to disclose. He is an unpaid board member of Practicing Physicians of America, a 501c6 physician membership organization.
- Dr. Sanborn has no conflicts to disclose
- Dr. Cutler has no conflicts to disclose. Dr. Culter serves on the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) "Vision Commission" tasked with evaluating the current state of ABMS Maintenance of Certification and is an advisor to Practicing Physicians of America

Background

- 1933 – Advisory Board of Medical Specialties (today's American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS)) was created.
- 1936 - The American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM) created.
- For the first 33 years of existence, the ABMS and its member boards issued lifetime certificates following passage of a one-time board certification examination.
- Later, some boards argued that one-time certification did not provide sufficient evidence that physicians could remain competent throughout their careers.

Background

- 1969 American Board of Family Medicine was created
 - Only issued time-limited certificates
- 1976 Am Board of Surgery and Am Board of Thoracic Surgery
 - Both switched to time-limited certificates.
- 1986 Am Board of Internal Medicine
 - Began issuing time-limited certificates for Critical Care specialists and all other medical subspecialties in 1990.
 - Physicians internists who received their certificates before 1990 were “grandfathered” and did not have to re-certify.

Background

- In 1998, the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) established their “Task Force on Competence,” which led all ABMS member boards to create expanded and more standardized form of time-limited board certification called Maintenance of Certification™ (MOC™).
 - MOC™ comprised of four parts:
 - Part I: Licensure and professional standing
 - Part II: Life-long learning and self-assessment
 - Part III: Cognitive expertise through formal examination
 - Part IV: Practice performance assessment

Background

- By 2006, all 24 ABMS member boards had received approval for their individual MOC™ products.
- In 2013, the American Osteopathic Association followed suit, instituted time-limited certificates for osteopaths called “Osteopathic Continuous Certification (OCC).”

Physician Concerns With Continuous Certification

- Effectiveness
- Fiscal irresponsibility
- Cost
- Research methods
- Undisclosed lobbying
- Business conflicts exposed during Congressional testimony



Background

- Despite 18 years of MOC™/OCC there is little independent evidence of improved patient outcomes or safety.
- Physician and surgeon perspectives on MOC™/OCC's conflicts of interest, research methodologies, and adverse effects are unknown.

Methods

- We performed an Internet-based voluntary survey of practicing physician and surgeon perspectives on initial and continuous US Board Certification

Methods

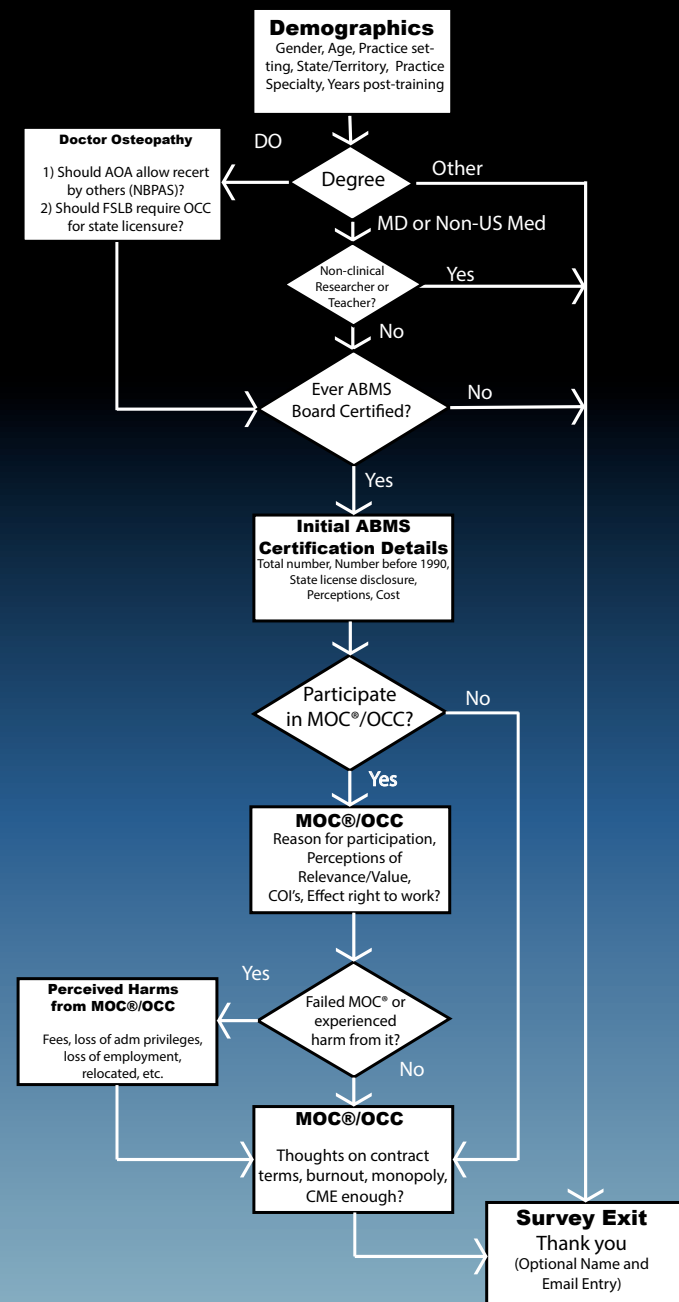
- SurveyMonkey (San Mateo, CA)
 - 8 pages, 32 questions
- Voluntary recruitment by social media channels
- 12 Jan 2018- 19 March 2018
- Told they would be asked for their name/email at the end of survey when starting survey.
- Likert Scales 1-5 for attitudes on initial and continuous certification
- IP addresses tracked to exclude non-US participants and to encourage limit multiple responses from same person.
- Skip page logic used to direct participants to appropriate questions based on their answers.

Exclusion Requirements

- Non-physicians or surgeons
- Physicians/surgeons from outside US (except physicians in the military/charitable organizations overseas)
- Non-clinical researchers
- Industry-employed physicians
- Physicians not yet certified

Survey

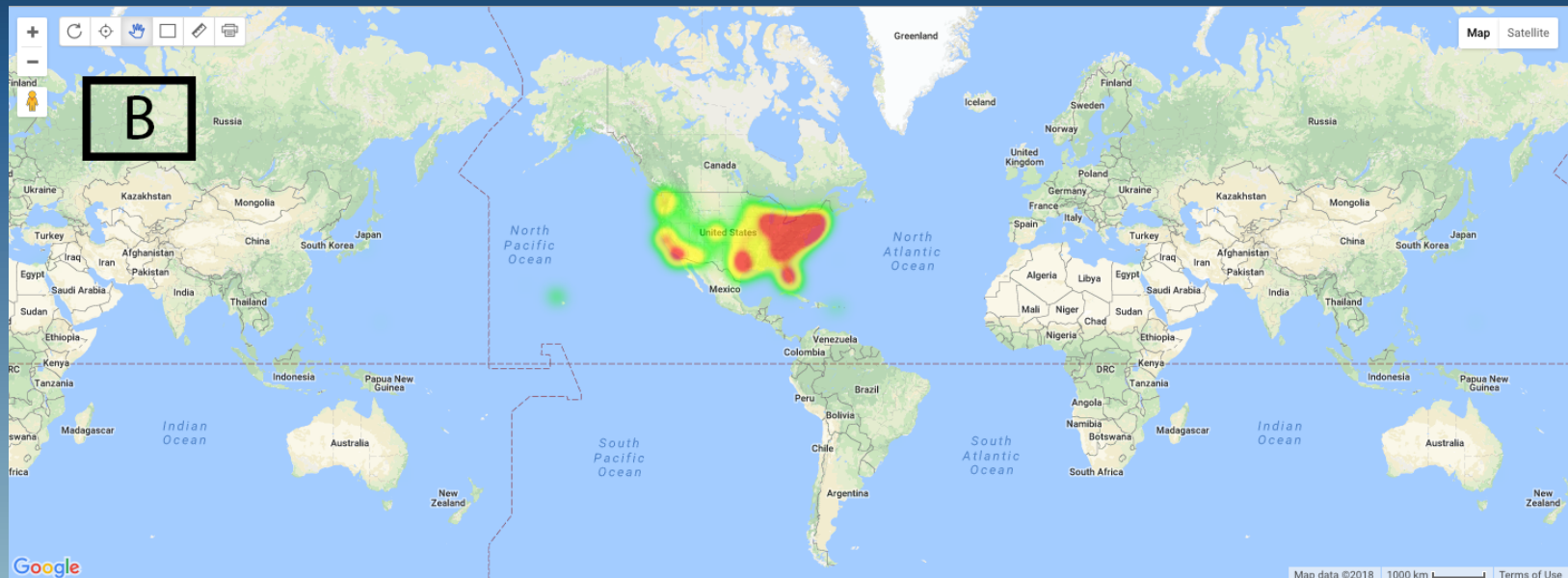
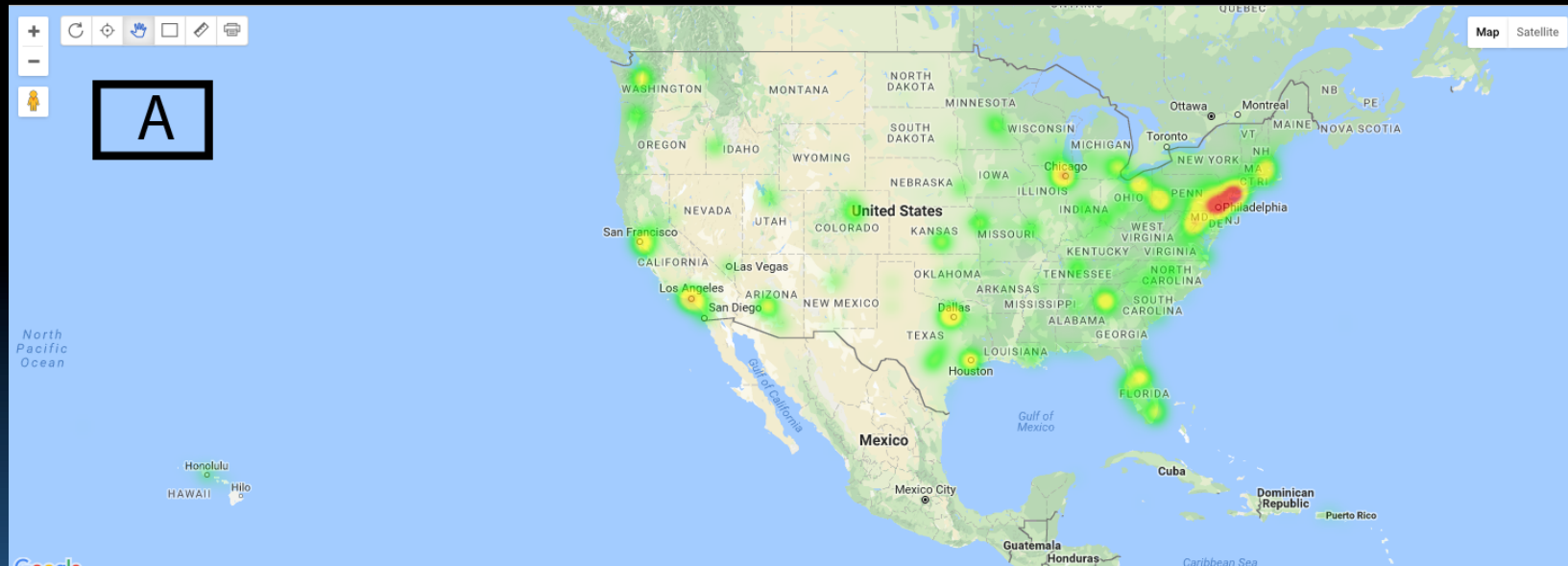
- Demographics
 - Age/gender/state/specialty
 - Practice setting
- Practicing DO, MD, non-US degrees only
- Ever Board Certified?
 - Number of certifications
 - Number before 1990
 - State licensure disclosure
 - Likert scale 1-5
 - Value
 - Cost
 - Ability to assess quality
- Participating in MOC™/OCC
 - Reason
 - Relevance/value
 - COI's
 - Right to Work
 - Harms
- Thoughts on contract terms/burnout/monopoly/CME enough



Results

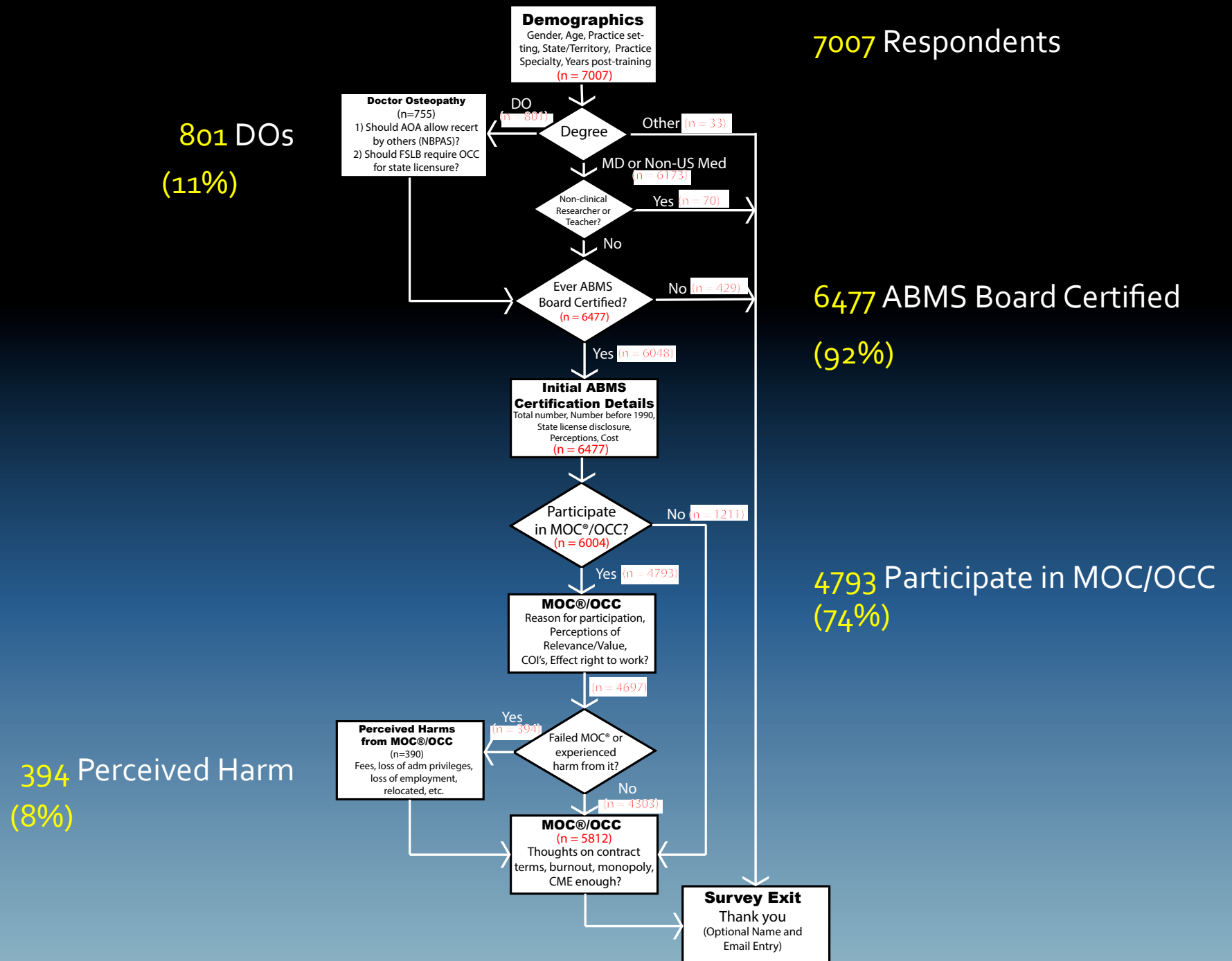
- 7125 responses
- 7007 physician/surgeon responses available for analysis after overseas/incomplete surveys removed.

Heat Map of Respondent IP Addresses (n=7007)



Demographic Characteristics

• Gender	<u>n (%)</u>
– Male	3632 (52)
– Female	3375 (48)
• Age	
– 21-35	771 (11)
– 36-50	3378 (48)
– 51-65	2307 (33)
– 66 or older	551 (8)
• Practice Setting	
– Private Practice	1865 (27)
– Group Practice/Independent	1199 (17)
– Hospital/University/HealthSystem Employee	2939 (42)
– Group Practice / Contracted	637 (9)
– Other	369 (5)
• Stage of Training	
– Have MD/DO but not finished	120 (2)
– Clinical physician post training 0-10 years	2330 (33)
– Clinical physician post training 11-20 years	2048 (29)
– Clinical physician post training 21-30 years	1527 (22)
– Clinical physician > 30 years	760 (11)
– Retired clinical physician	152 (2)
– Teach physicians, don't see patient	32 (0)
– Non-clinical research physician	38 (1)

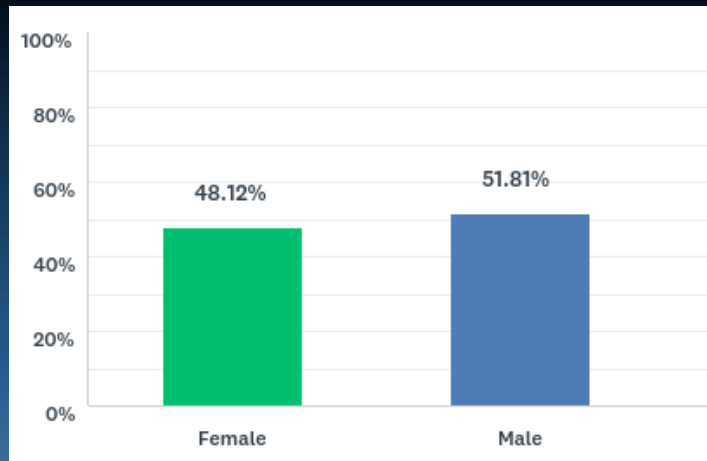


Demographics

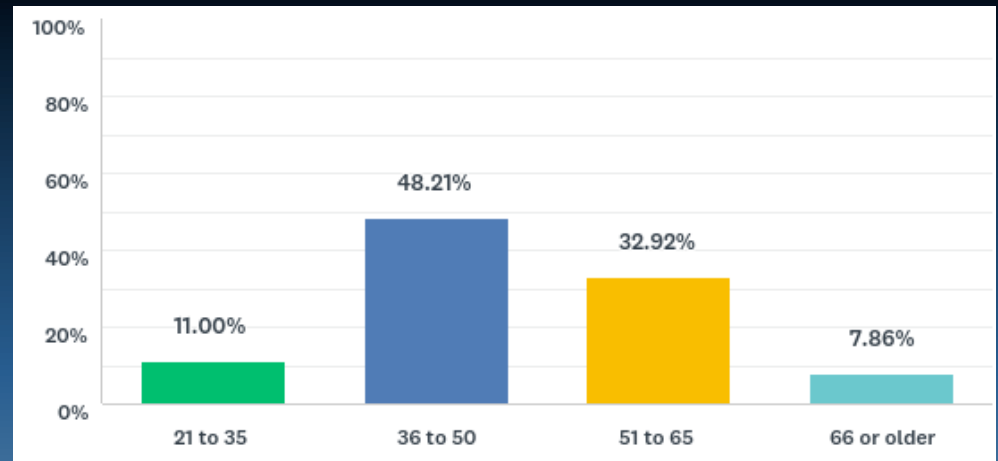
Gender, Age, Practice Setting

(n = 7007)

Gender

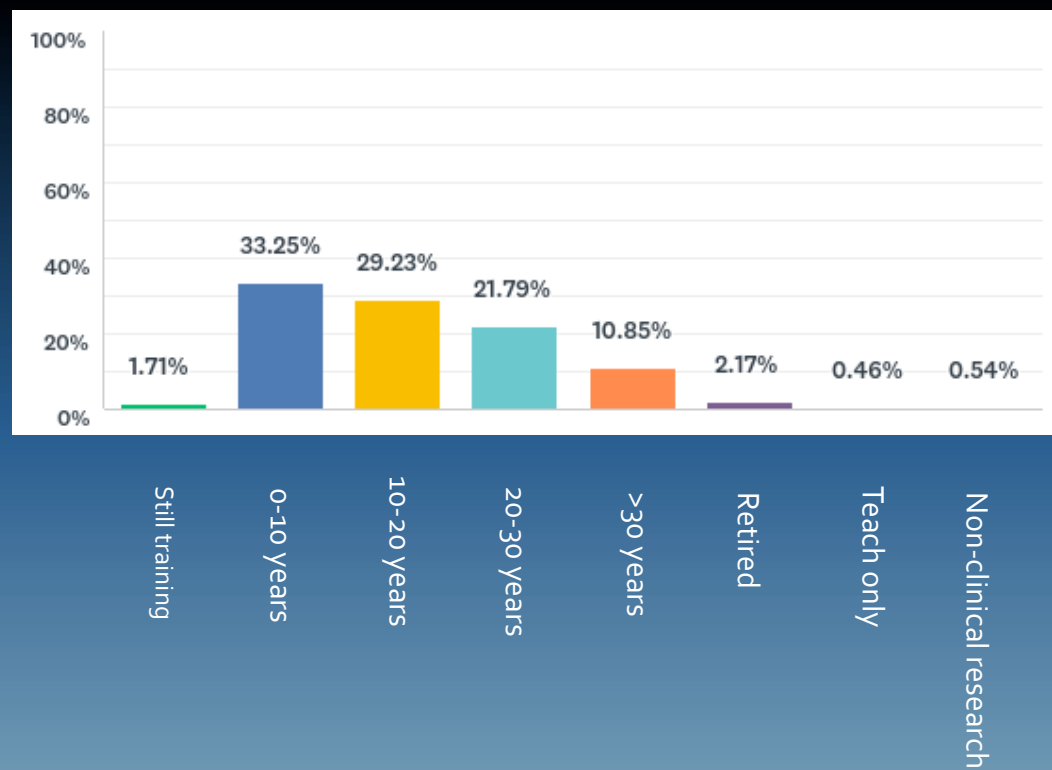
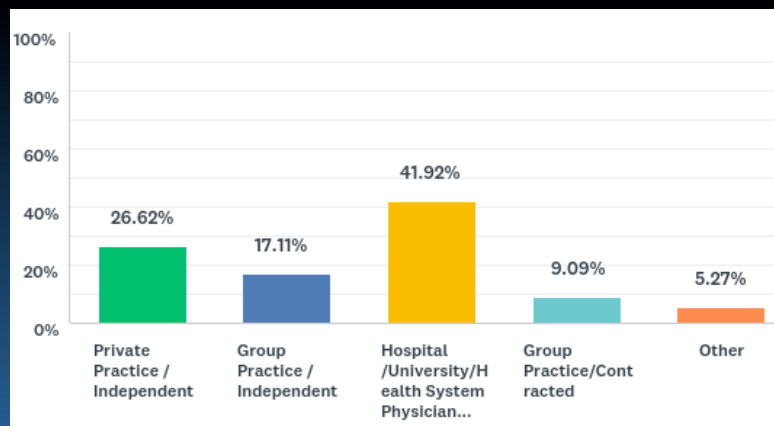


Age

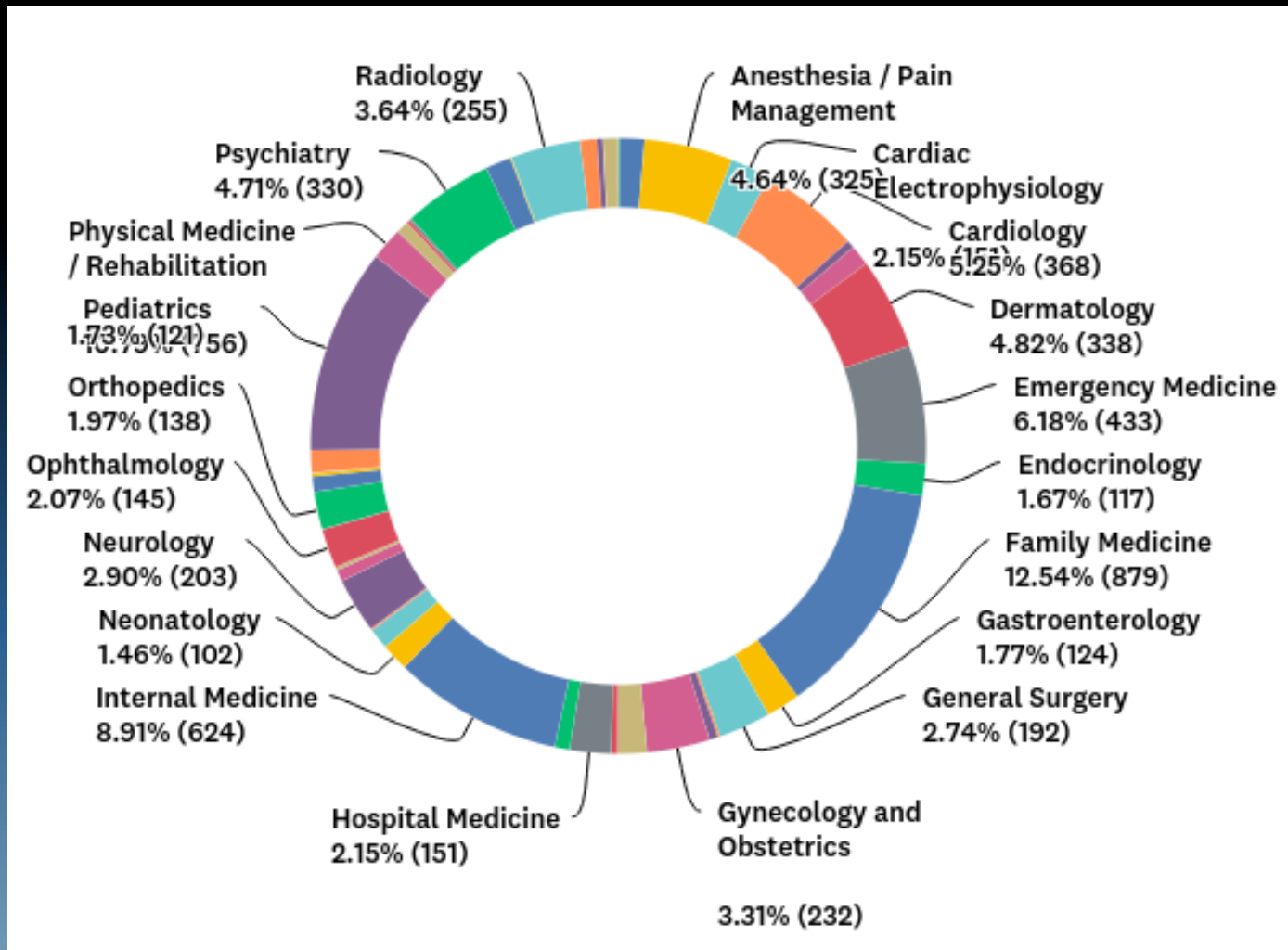


Practice Setting/Years in Practice

(n=7007)



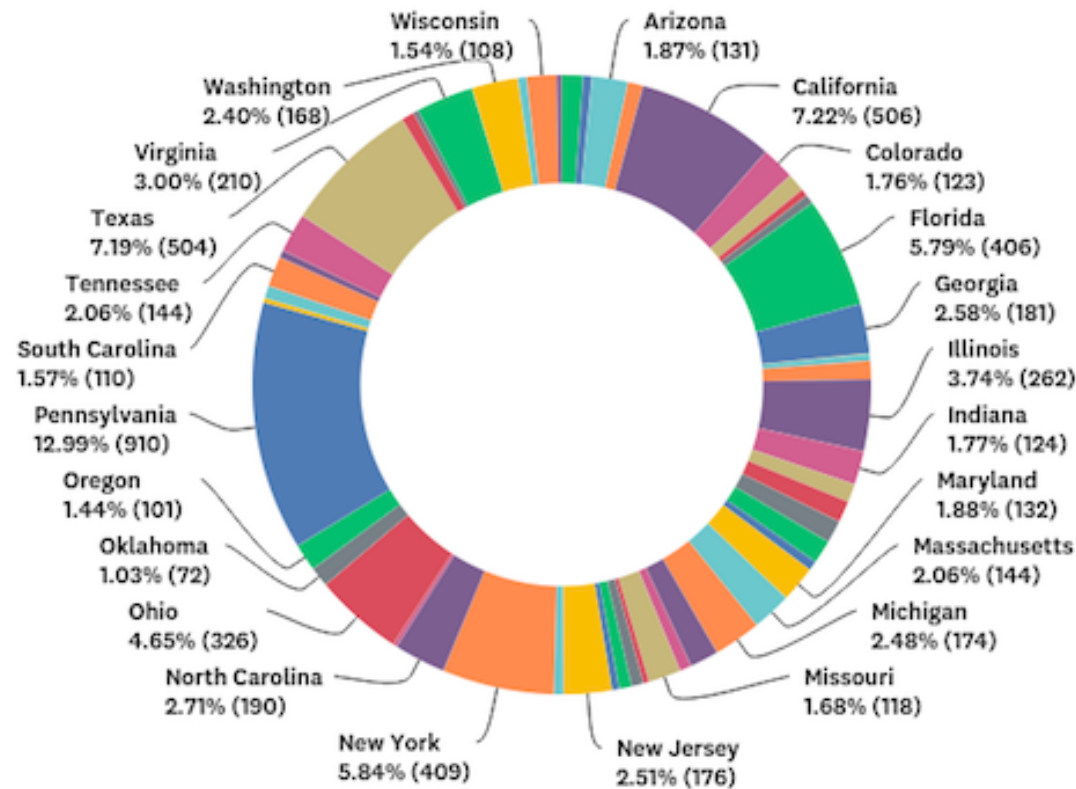
Primary Practice Specialty*



* Correlation to 2016 AAMC Practicing Physician Workforce 0.87 p = 0.76

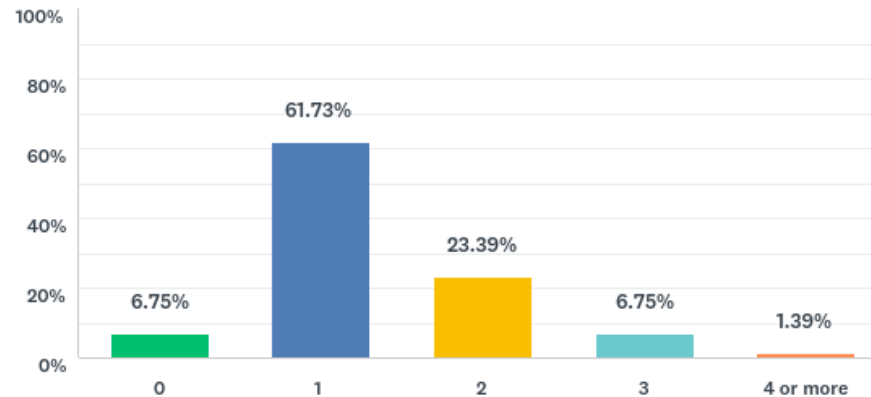
In What State or US Territory Do You Practice Medicine?

(n=7007)

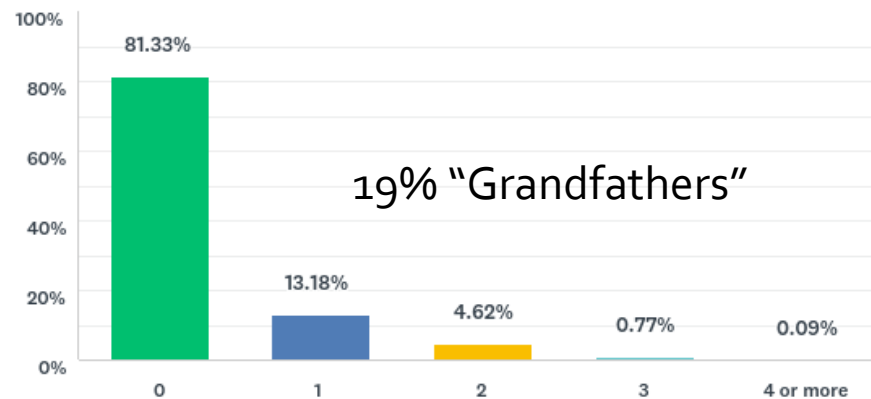


Initial Board Certification

Q11 How many valid ABMS Board certificates do you carry?



Q12 How many of your ABMS Board certifications were acquired before 1990?



Initial Board Certification Perceptions

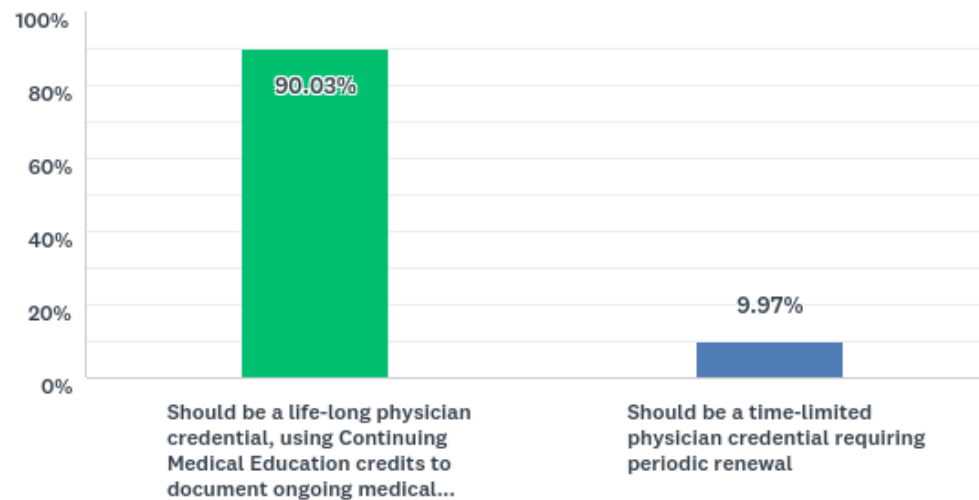
Q14 Please rate your perceptions of the following regarding the Board certification process in United States:



Physician Perceptions of Board Certification

n = 6477

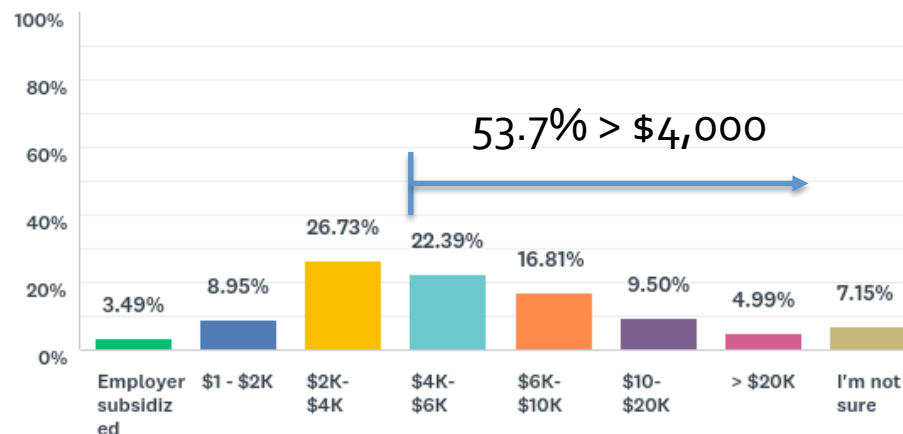
Q15 I believe initial ABMS or AOA Board Certification



Estimated Costs

(n = 6477)

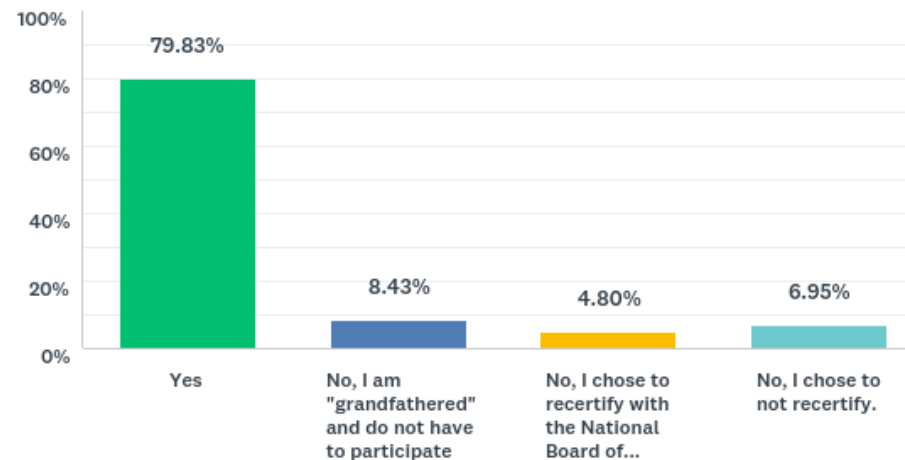
Q16 My most recent estimated total cost to become certified or maintain ABMS or AOA board certification was (please include cost of study materials, Board review course cost, travel/hotel costs, cost of time away from work):



How Many Doctors Participate in Continuous Certification?

(n=6004)

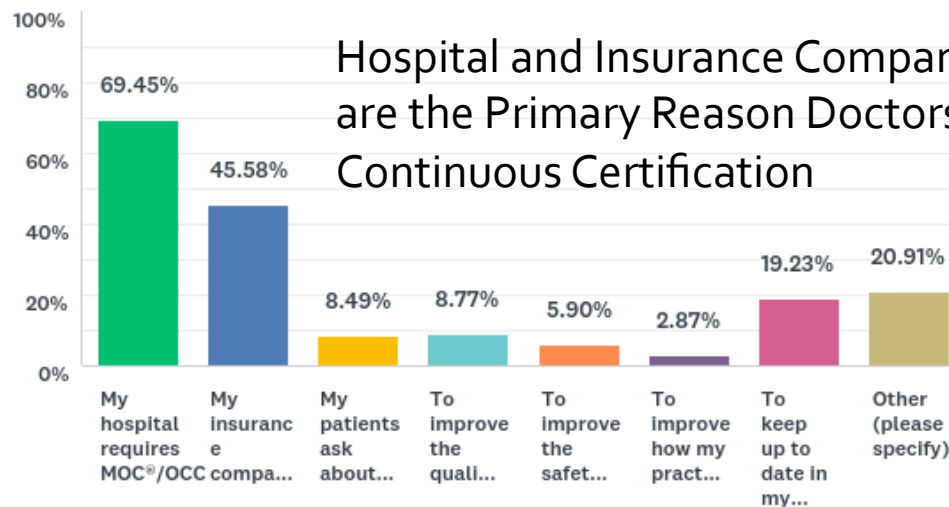
Q17 Do you participate in ABMS Maintenance of Certification® (MOC®) or Osteopathic Continuous Certification (OCC)?



Of Those That Participate in MOC/OCC, Why Do They Do So?

(n=4697)

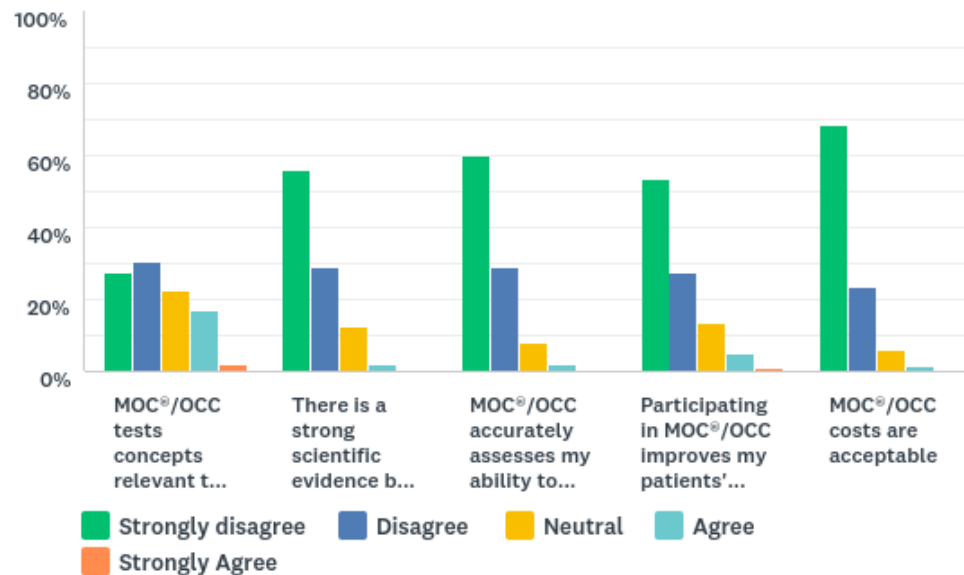
Q18 I participate in Maintenance of Certification® (MOC®)/Osteopathic Continuous Certification (OCC) because (check all that apply):



Physician Perceptions of MOC/OCC

(n=4697)

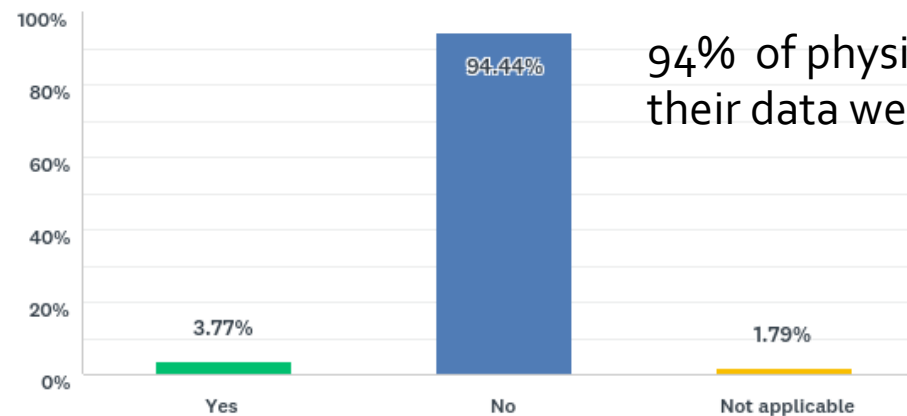
Q19 Please rate the following aspects of Maintenance of Certification® (MOC®) / Osteopathic Continuous Certification (OCC)



MOC/OCC Conflicts of Interest Awareness

(n=4697)

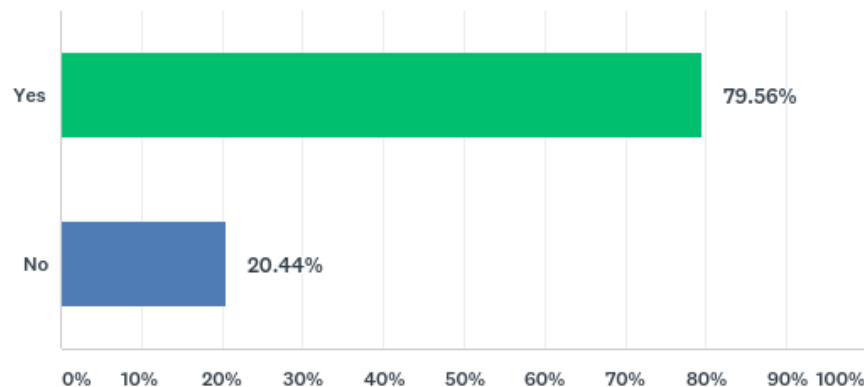
Q20 When enrolling for Maintenance of Certification®, I was made aware that ABMS Solutions, LLC a for-profit wholly-owned subsidiary of the American Board of Medical Specialties, sells my certification status to third parties.



94% of physicians unaware
their data were being sold

Research Techniques

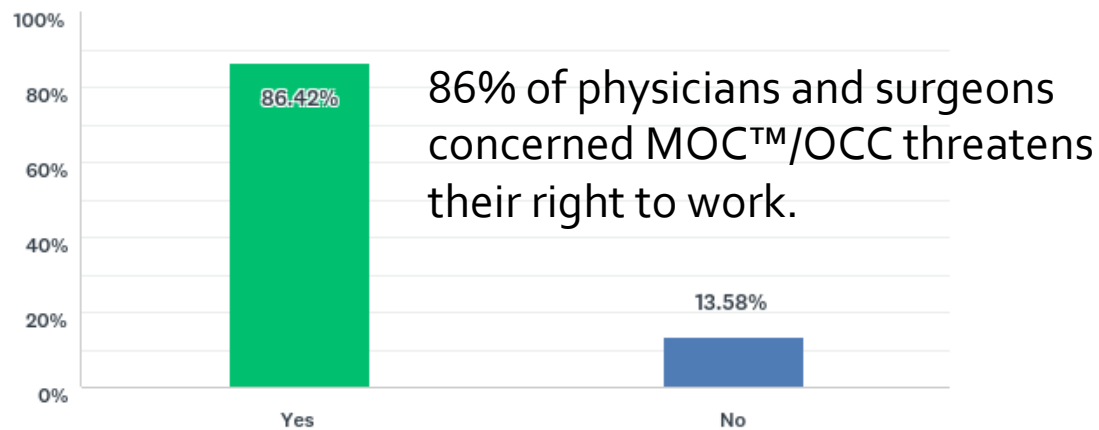
Q26 The American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM), requires its diplomates enrolling in MOC® to agree to the following: "I also understand that ABIM may use my examination performance, training program evaluations, self-evaluation of knowledge and practice assessment, and other information for research purposes, including collaborating with other research investigators and scientific publications." Should the AOA or ABMS member boards conducting research on physicians (or their practice) be required to obtain Institutional Board Review oversight and provide informed consent to diplomates before conducting research in accordance with Department of Health and Human Services' regulations involving the protection of human research subjects?



Perceived Right to Work Threat

(n = 4697)

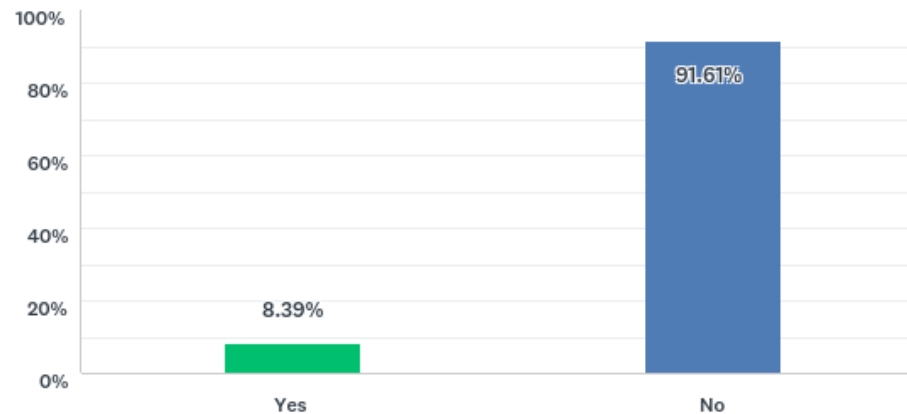
Q21 Do you believe Maintenance of Certification® (or Osteopathic Continuous Certification) could threaten your right to work as a physician?



What Percentage of Physicians Fail Re-certification?

(n= 4697)

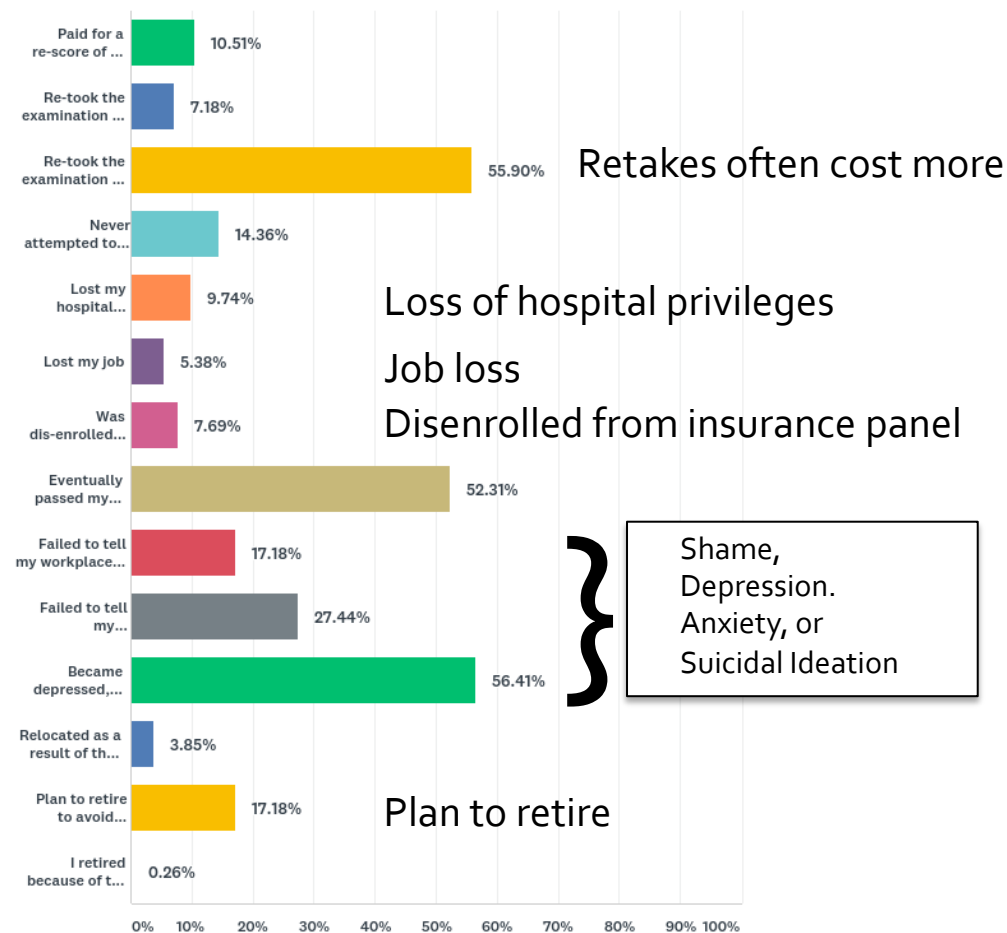
Q22 Have you ever failed a Maintenance of Certification® examination, lost your Board certification (even briefly), or experienced harm because of MOC®/OCC requirements?



Perceived Harms of Failing Re-certification

(n=390)

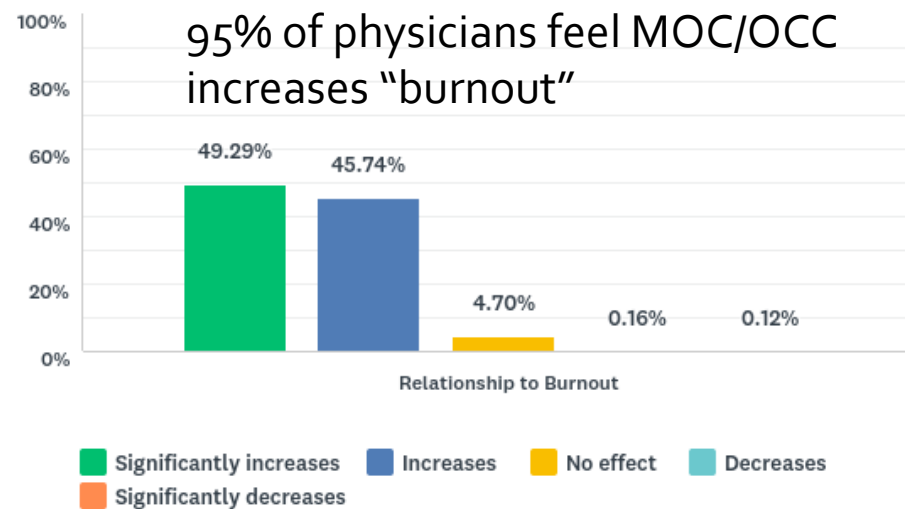
Q23 The adverse effects of Maintenance of Certification® or Osteopathic Continuous Certification have never been studied. Please check all adverse effects of MOC or consequences of failing or losing your Board certification (check all that apply):



Contribution to Physician "Burnout"

(n = 5805)

Q27 To what extent do you believe Maintenance of Certification® /Osteopathic Continuous Certification contribute to physician burnout?



For More Information

- <http://www.practicingphysician.org/MOC>