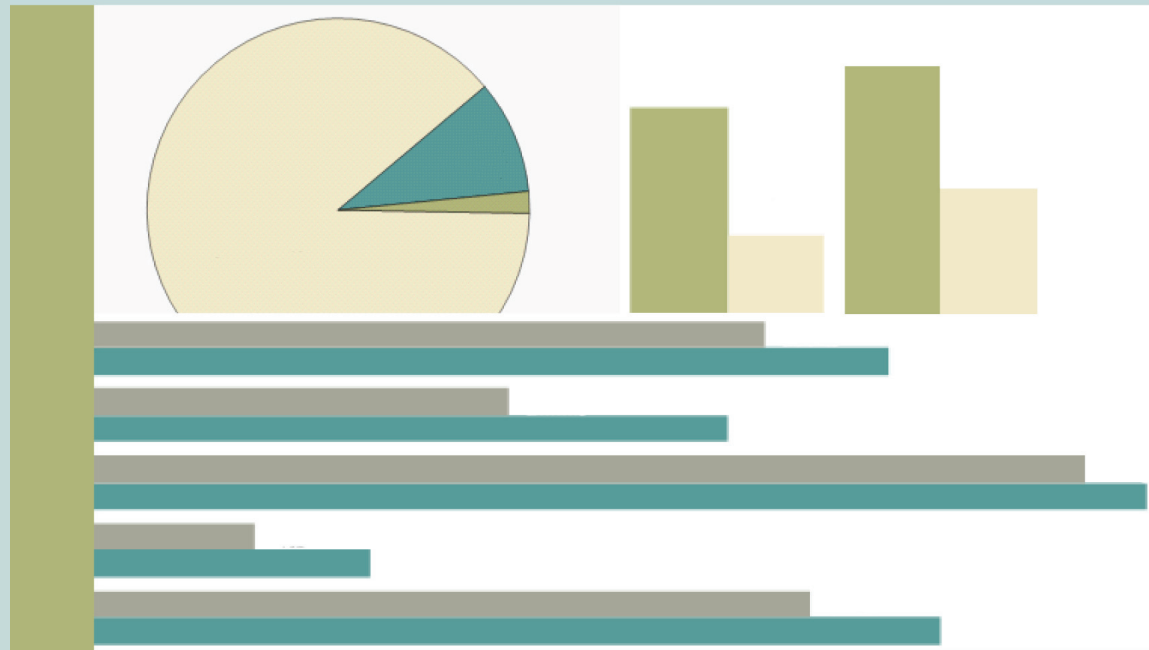


2009

Applicants to COCA-Accredited Osteopathic and LCME-Accredited Allopathic Medical Schools

A survey analysis of the 2009 AACOMAS applicant pool



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aacomTM

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF
COLLEGES OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE

Executive Summary

In August 2009, a brief online survey was sent to all 12,617¹ applicants who completed an AACOMAS application to any of the 24 AACOMAS participating colleges of osteopathic medicine or their three branch campuses. The response rate for the survey was 21.4 percent (2,701 respondents). Fifty-five percent of respondents received at least one offer of admission from an osteopathic medical college, and 36 percent of respondents enrolled in an osteopathic medical college. Seventy percent of respondents also applied to a U.S. allopathic medical school, and 15 percent matriculated in a U.S. allopathic medical school and did not enroll in the osteopathic medical school to which they were admitted.

The mean total MCAT score of those respondents who were offered admission to an osteopathic medical school was 27.3; higher than the mean total score of 24.7 for those respondents who were not admitted to an osteopathic school. Mean total GPA was 3.50 for those applicants who were offered admission to osteopathic medical schools; slightly lower than the mean GPA (3.56) of respondents who were offered admission to a U.S. allopathic medical school.

The geographic location of the medical school was the top reason given by both osteopathic (59 percent) and U.S. allopathic (55 percent) matriculants for choosing the school in which they enrolled. The college's approach to learning and its reputation were highly ranked by all respondents. Only respondents enrolling in an U.S. allopathic medical school (49 percent) considered the cost of their education to be a key factor in choosing their school.

Half of respondents had decided by the end of high school that they definitely wanted to study medicine—of these, 24.9 percent had decided before high school and 25.2 percent decided during high school.

¹ A completed AACOMAS application is one for which all materials have been submitted, including MCAT scores and transcripts.

Survey Methodology

In August 2009, in order to gain a deeper understanding of the 2009 AACOMAS applicant pool, a brief online survey was sent out to all 12,617 applicants who had completed an AACOMAS application to any of the 24 AACOMAS participating colleges of osteopathic medicine or their three branch campuses.² The survey was sent through ConstantContact³ to the email addresses the applicants had used when completing the AACOMAS application. Applicants who did not respond to the survey invitation were sent two reminder emails at weekly intervals. After the initial invitation and two follow-up reminders, the response rate for the survey was 21.4 percent (2,706 out of 12,617).⁴

The survey asked applicants if they received one or more offers of admission from the osteopathic medical schools to which they applied and, if they received one or more offers of admission, whether they enrolled in an osteopathic medical school. Applicants were asked if they applied to U.S. allopathic medical schools or to offshore medical schools. Those respondents who enrolled in a medical school were asked to choose the top reasons for selecting that school, and all others were asked whether they intend to reapply in 2010. All applicants were asked when they first decided that they wanted to study medicine. The survey used branching and skip patterns, so respondents only reached questions that were relevant, dependent on their previous answers.

Respondent data from the survey were merged with the AACOMAS applicant database, allowing for access to the full set of applicant demographic data as well as GPAs and MCAT scores. We checked to see whether the sampling frame was representative of the survey population for the social demographic characteristics of gender, age, race and ethnicity, and were satisfied with the results. However, we found the survey sample to be over-representative of applicants who enrolled in an osteopathic medical school. We calculated a post-stratification weight to correct for the bias that was introduced into our sample by the over-sampling of applicants who enrolled in an osteopathic medical

² The University of North Texas Health Science Center College of Osteopathic Medicine does not participate in AACOMAS.

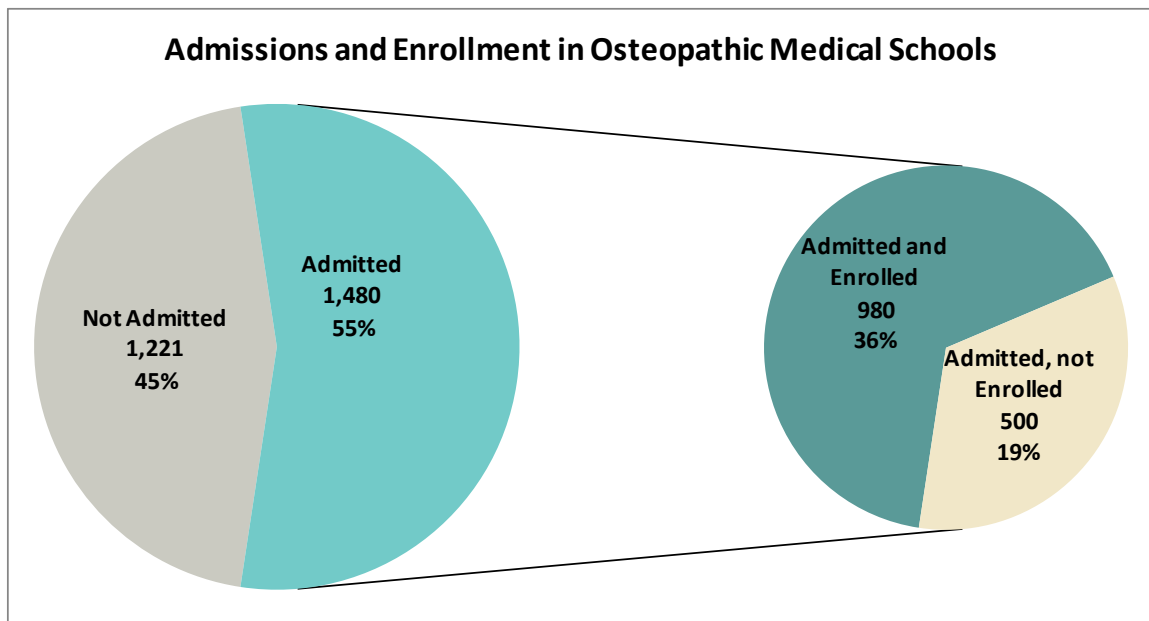
³ ConstantContact is an online email service that allows for bypassing spam filters and monitors responses to allow for follow-up reminders.

⁴ Bounce back rate was less than 0.5 percent.

school. The weight for enrolled applicants is 0.7059 and for non-enrolled applicants is 1.3061.

Admission to Osteopathic Medical School

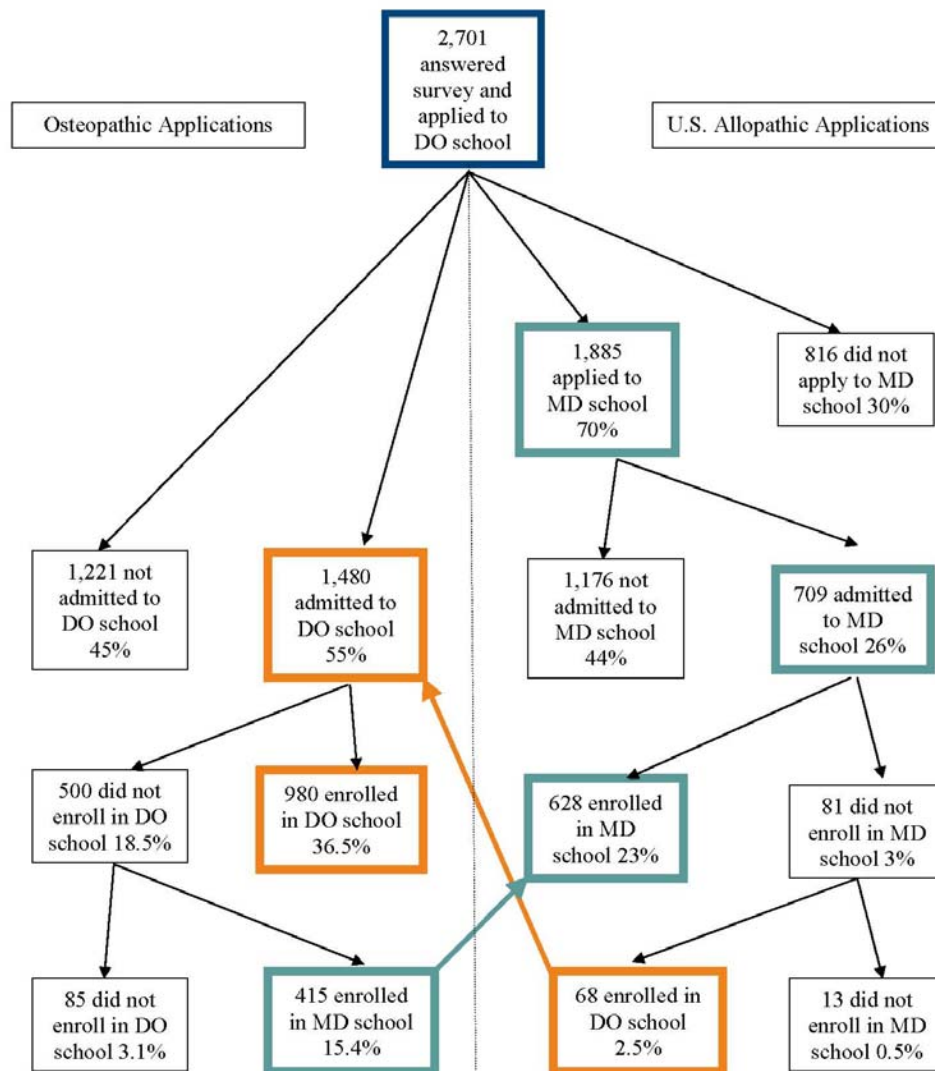
Survey respondents were asked whether they were offered admission to any of the osteopathic colleges to which they applied. Overall, 45 percent of respondents were not offered admission to any osteopathic college and 55 percent of respondents received at least one offer of admission. The mean number of offers of admissions to respondents who were offered admission to an osteopathic medical college was 1.73. Thirty-six percent of all respondents enrolled in an osteopathic school, and the remaining 19 percent of those who were offered admission did not enroll. Sixty-five percent of those offered admission enrolled in an osteopathic medical college. Further examination of those applicants who were offered admission to an osteopathic medical school but did not enroll tells us that 83 percent of these applicants, who represent 15 percent of our total applicant pool, matriculated in a U.S. allopathic medical school.



Survey respondents were asked whether they applied to any U.S. allopathic (MD-granting) medical schools. Seventy percent of respondents applied to at least one U.S. allopathic medical school and the remaining 30 percent did not apply to any U.S. allopathic schools.

The flow chart following charts the decision process from application through admission to enrollment for both osteopathic and U.S.allopathic applications.

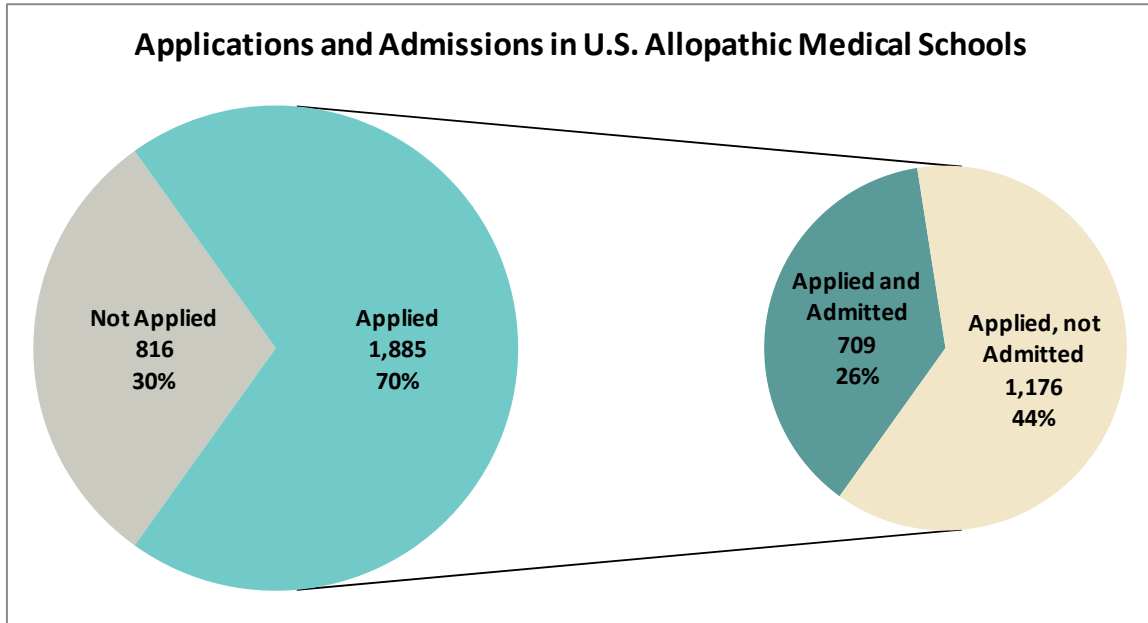
Flow Chart for Applications, Admissions and Enrollment in Osteopathic and U.S. Allopathic Colleges of Medicine



All percentages are of the total number of survey respondents.
Number of respondents are weighted.

Admission to U.S. Allopathic Medical School

Of the 70 percent (1885) of all respondents who also applied to U.S. allopathic medical schools, 26 percent (709) received at least one offer of admission and the remaining 44 percent did not receive any offers.

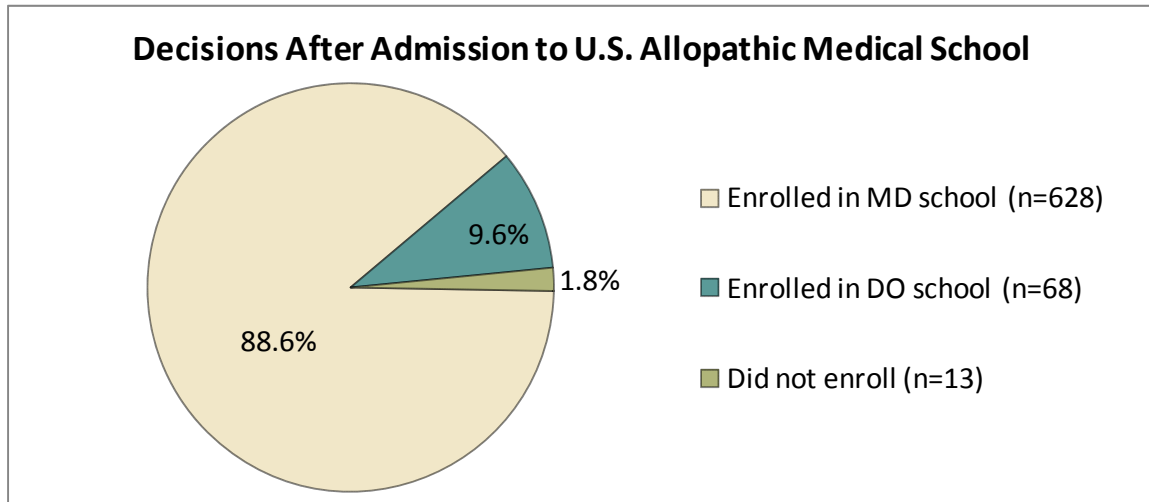


The table below details the number of applications and offers of admission received by those respondents who applied to U.S. allopathic medical schools.

Number of Applications/Offers	Percent of Respondents Submitting an Application	Percent of Respondents Receiving an Offer of Admission
1	6.6%	62.3%
2-5	35.0%	35.3%
6-10	27.4%	2.4%
More than 10	31.1%	0%

The majority of respondents, 88.6 percent, who were offered admission to a U.S. allopathic medical school enrolled in a U.S. MD granting school. Of those offered

admission to a U.S. allopathic school, 9.6 percent chose to enroll in an osteopathic medical school and the remaining 1.8 percent did not enroll in any medical school.



Admission to Offshore Medical School

Survey respondents were asked whether they applied to any offshore MD-granting medical schools. Nine percent of respondents also applied to at least one offshore medical school and the remaining 91 percent did not apply to any offshore schools. Of those respondents who applied to an offshore school 72 percent also applied to a U.S. allopathic medical school (as well as at least one osteopathic medical college).

The table below describes the number of applications submitted to offshore medical schools by those respondents who applied to at least one offshore school.

<u>Number of Applications</u>	<u>Percent of Respondents</u>
1	56.1%
2-5	41.2%
More than 5	2.7%

Of those respondents who applied to an offshore medical school, 78.4 percent were offered admission to at least one offshore school. Data are unavailable for the number of respondents enrolled in an offshore MD-granting school. Twenty-five percent of respondents offered admission to an offshore school enrolled in a U.S. allopathic medical school and an additional 10 percent enrolled in an osteopathic medical school.

MCAT Scores and GPA

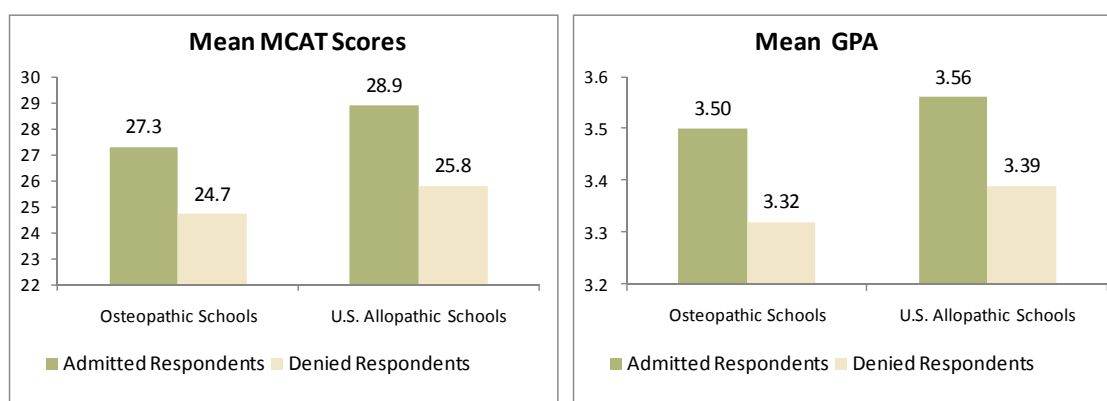
The mean total MCAT score of those respondents who were offered osteopathic medical school admission (regardless of whether they enrolled) was 27.3; higher than the mean total score of 24.7 for those respondents who were not admitted to an osteopathic medical school. Among those respondents who also applied to a U.S. allopathic medical school, the mean total MCAT score was 28.9 for those respondents who were offered admission, compared to 25.8 for those who were denied admission. The differences between all these mean MCAT scores are statistically significant at $p \leq 0.05$. There was no significant difference in MCAT scores between respondents who were and were not offered admission to offshore medical schools.

Mean total GPA was 3.50 for those applicants who were offered admission to osteopathic medical schools; slightly lower than the mean GPA (3.56) of respondents who were offered admission to a U.S. allopathic medical school. Respondents who were denied admission to an osteopathic medical school had a mean GPA of 3.32 compared to 3.39 for respondents who were denied admission to the U.S. allopathic medical schools to which they applied. All differences between means are significant at $p \leq 0.05$.

The following table charts the GPA and MCAT scores received by respondents who applied and were offered admission to medical school.

Test Scores	Respondents who Applied			Respondents who Received Offers of Admission	
	All Respondents	DO Only	MD + DO	DO	MD
MCAT	26.12 ⁵	24.09	26.98	27.3	28.9
GPA	3.42 ⁶	3.33	3.48	3.50	3.56

These graphs highlight the difference in MCAT scores and GPA between respondents who were and were not admitted to medical schools.



Osteopathic Designations

On average, each respondent designated 6.88⁷ osteopathic medical schools on the AACOMAS application. Applicants who also applied to U.S. allopathic medical schools designated 6.45 osteopathic medical schools, whereas applicants who also applied to offshore medical schools designated 8.24 medical schools.

⁵ The mean MCAT score among all AACOMAS applicants was 25.50 and is different from this score (26.12) that represents only those applicants who responded to the survey.

⁶ The mean total GPA among all AACOMAS applicants was 3.40 and is different from this score (3.42) that represents only those applicants who responded to the survey.

⁷The mean number of designations among all AACOMAS applicants was 7.28 and is different from this mean (6.88) that represents only those applicants who responded to the survey.

School Selection

Respondents who enrolled in a medical school were asked to select from a list the top three reasons for selecting that school. The lists below detail the selections that were available and were randomized by the survey software for each respondent. No respondents to the survey enrolled in offshore medical schools.

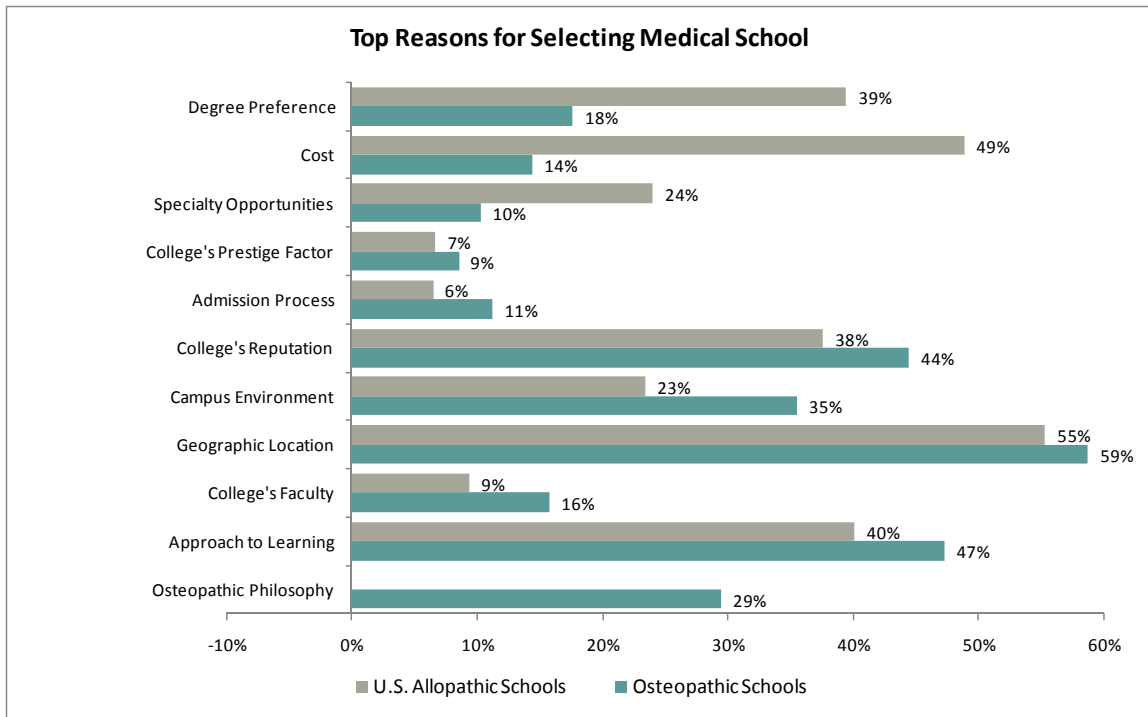
Osteopathic Reasons

- Osteopathic philosophy
- College's approach to learning and teaching
- College's faculty
- College's geographic location
- Campus environment
- College's reputation
- College's admission process
- College's prestige factor
- Opportunities for specialty selection
- Cost
- Prefer to have DO degree

U.S. Allopathic Reasons

- College's approach to learning and teaching
- College's faculty
- College's geographic location
- Campus environment
- College's reputation
- College's admission process
- College's prestige factor
- Opportunities for specialty selection
- Cost
- Prefer to have MD degree

The following chart shows the percent of respondents attending a medical school who selected each reason as one of their top three reasons for choosing their school. For example, 39 percent of respondents attending a U.S. allopathic medical school chose their preference to have a MD degree as one of their top three reasons for selecting the medical school they attend. In comparison, 18 percent of respondents attending an osteopathic medical school chose their preference to have a DO degree as one of their top three reasons for selecting the medical school they attend.

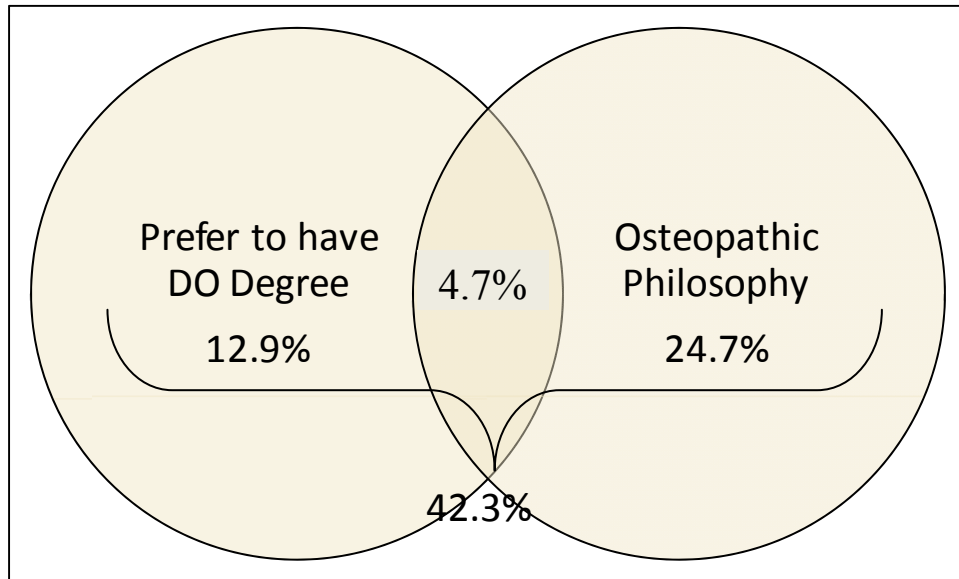


The geographic location of the medical school was the top reason given by both osteopathic (59 percent) and U.S. allopathic (55 percent) matriculants for choosing the school in which they enrolled. The college's approach to learning and its reputation also were highly ranked by respondents. Only respondents enrolling in a U.S. allopathic medical school (49 percent) considered the cost of their education to be a key factor in choosing their school.

Respondents attending a U.S. allopathic medical school were more than twice as likely to select cost (49/14 percent), degree preference (39/18 percent) or specialty opportunities (24/10 percent) as top reasons for choosing their school than respondents attending an osteopathic school.

Whereas 39 percent of respondents selected preferring a MD degree as one of their top three reasons for choosing the U.S. allopathic medical school they attend, only 18 percent of respondents selected preferring a DO degree as one of their three top reasons for choosing the osteopathic medical school that they attend. The two reasons, prefer to have a DO degree and the osteopathic philosophy, were chosen together as top reasons by only

4.7 percent of respondents attending an osteopathic medical school. However, 42.3 percent of osteopathic medical school matriculants selected one or the other of these reasons.



While the geographic location was chosen as the top reason for selecting both osteopathic and U.S. allopathic medical schools, the breakdown by COM shows variations between schools. The charts below show for each category any COM at which more than 50 percent of matriculants selected that category as a top reason for attending their osteopathic school. Cost was selected as a top reason at two colleges, LECOM (66 percent of matriculants) and UMDNJ-SOM (62 percent of matriculants). The college's faculty was selected as a top reason at two colleges: PCSOM (61 percent of matriculants) and LMU-DCOM (59 percent of matriculants). (Because respondents were only allowed to select three top reasons for choosing the medical school attended – if all reasons were equally distributed, the school does not appear at all.)

Percent of Matriculants at Osteopathic Medical Schools Selecting Geographic Location as a Top Reason for Attending that School	
TOUROCOM-NY	97%
PNWU-COM	95%
TUCOM-CA	90%
GA-PCOM	88%
TUNCOM	81%
NYCOM	77%
CCOM/MWU	74%
RVUCOM	73%
Western U/COMP	72%
UNECOM	71%
ATSU-SOMA	67%
PCOM	65%
UMDNJ-SOM	65%
MSUCOM	63%
LECOM-BR	62%
OSU-COM	61%
VCOM	60%
AZCOM/MWU	53%

Percent of Matriculants at Osteopathic Medical Schools Selecting the College's Approach to Learning as a Top Reason for Attending that School	
LECOM-BR	98%
ATSU-SOMA	92%
PCSOM	74%
OU-COM	72%
KCUMB-COM	71%
VCOM	67%
NSU-COM	60%
LMU-DCOM	59%
LECOM	53%
WVSOM	53%
PNWU-COM	50%
RVUCOM	50%

Percent of Matriculants at Osteopathic Medical Schools Selecting the Campus Environment as a Top Reason for Attending that School	
DMU-COM	74%
WVSOM	60%
ATSU-KCOM	58%
RVUCOM	57%
UNECOM	56%
AZCOM/MWU	55%

Percent of Matriculants at Osteopathic Medical Schools Selecting the College's Reputation as a Top Reason for Attending that School	
MSUCOM	78%
CCOM/MWU	77%
PCOM	77%
Western U/COMP	67%
DMU-COM	61%
OSU-COM	61%
NYCOM	56%
ATSU-KCOM	55%
AZCOM/MWU	52%
WVSOM	51%

Deciding to Study Medicine

All respondents were asked when they definitely decided they wanted to study medicine. Half of respondents had decided by the end of high school, with 24.9 percent deciding before high school and 25.2 percent deciding during high school.

<u>Decision to Study Medicine</u>	<u>Percent of Respondents</u>
Before High School	24.9%
During High School	25.2%
During First Two Years of College	20.2%
During Junior Year of College	10.7%
During Senior Year of College	4.0%
After Receiving Bachelor's Degree	11.6%
After Receiving Advanced Degree	3.4%

In total, 15 percent of respondents decided to study medicine after completing the bachelor's degree (11.6+3.4). However, among respondents who applied only to an osteopathic medical school, 17.5 percent decided to study medicine after receiving a bachelor's degree. In comparison, among respondents who applied to both an osteopathic and a U.S. allopathic medical school, only 13.9 percent decided after receiving a bachelor's degree. In other words, applicants who apply only to osteopathic medical school are more likely to have decided to study medicine after completing their bachelor's degrees than applicants who also apply to U.S. allopathic schools. This correlates with the fact that the average age of applicants who applied only to osteopathic medical schools is 26.09 years, higher than the age (24.81 years) of applicants who applied to both osteopathic and U.S. allopathic schools. All differences are statistically significant at $p \leq 0.05$.

Reapplying to Medical School

Respondents who did not matriculate into a medical school were asked whether they plan to reapply for enrollment to medical college in 2010.

<u>Plans to Reapply in 2010</u>	<u>Percent of Respondents</u>
Reapply to Osteopathic Medical College	74%
Reapply to U.S. Allopathic Medical College	45%
Reapply to Offshore Medical College	11%
No plans to reapply	23%

Survey Comments

As part of the survey, respondents were given the option of submitting, as free form text, their comments about the application process. Respondents commented on a variety of aspects of the application process, including the general application process, the length of the process, the cost, customer service and a comparison between the AACOMAS and AMCAS application services.

- The majority of the comments from 279 respondents were about the general application process. Of these, 90 percent were positive and only 10 percent were negative.
- The second most common comment referred to the length of the application process, with many respondents referring in particular to the number of weeks it took for the primary application to be verified.
- In all, 102 respondents commented on the length of the process and 92 percent of the comments were negative. It must be noted that some respondents did not differentiate between the primary and secondary application process; complaints about the process length could be compounded by slow responses from the COMs.
- Customer service-related issues generated comments from 68 respondents, with more positive comments (63 percent) than negative (37 percent). Most of the negative comments related to the difficulty of reaching a live representative.

- The cost of the application process was commented on by 56 respondents, although here again it is difficult to distinguish between the cost of the primary and secondary application processes.
- Fifty-one respondents made a comparison between the AACOMAS application and the AMCAS application; 80 percent of these comparisons favored AACOMAS and only 20 percent favored AMCAS.
- Thirty-five respondents complained about the process of sending out transcripts to AACOMAS and to the COMs.

Discussion

This research is a first attempt to gain a broader understanding of the application process to osteopathic medical schools, as described by the applicants themselves. We also began the exploration of the process of deciding which medical school to attend. Put into context, the 980 respondents who enrolled in an osteopathic medical school represent 20 percent of the total 2009 first-time, first-year enrollees in the colleges that are part of the AACOMAS process.

Seventy percent of respondents to the survey applied to both osteopathic and U.S. allopathic medical schools. Twenty-six percent of survey respondents were admitted to at least one osteopathic and at least one U.S. allopathic medical school. Of those admitted to both an osteopathic medical school and a U.S. allopathic medical school, 89 percent enrolled in an allopathic medical school.

Reviewing the quantitative measures of applicant quality – MCAT and GPA -- shows that both accepted and denied applicants for U.S. MD-granting medical schools have higher scores than both accepted and denied applicants to DO-granting medical schools.

Osteopathic medical schools offer admission at a higher rate than do U.S. MD-granting medical schools. Osteopathic medical schools made offers of admission to 55 percent of applicants responding to the survey, while U.S. allopathic medical schools offered admission to 38 percent. Looking at the entire U.S. MD applicant pool, based on data published on the AAMC web site, U.S. allopathic medical schools accept 46 percent

of their applicants. (<http://www.aamc.org/data/facts/applicantmatriculant/table7-fact2009summary-web.pdf>)

Data from this survey and future follow-up surveys may help the osteopathic medical colleges increase the number of applicants and enroll a larger cohort of those who are accepted by both osteopathic and U.S. allopathic medical schools.

AACOM survey of 2009 applicants to Osteopathic Medical Colleges

Were you offered admission to any osteopathic medical schools (either during the regular process or from the wait-list)?

Y/N

If yes, please indicate those colleges from which you received an offer of admission from the list below. Mark all that apply.

List of COMs

Are you enrolling in an osteopathic medical school to which you were offered admission?

Y/N

If yes, please indicate the college in which you are enrolling from the list below.

List of COMs

Please indicate from the list below the top three reasons why you selected the osteopathic college that you are attending.

- Osteopathic philosophy
- College's approach to learning and teaching
- College's faculty
- College's geographic location,
- Cost
- Campus environment
- College's reputation
- College's admission process
- College's prestige factor
- Prefer to have DO degree
- Opportunities for specialty selection

Randomized order

Did you complete an application to one or more U.S. allopathic medical schools (MD degree granting) for enrollment in Fall 2009?

Y/N

If yes, to how many U.S. allopathic medical schools did you apply?

1

2-5

6-10

More than 10

Were you offered admission to any of the U.S. allopathic medical schools?

Yes/No

If yes, how many offers of admission did you receive?

- 1
- 2-5
- 6-10
- More than 10

Are you enrolling in the U.S. allopathic medical school to which you were offered admission?

Y/N

If yes, please indicate the name of the U.S. allopathic medical school in which you are enrolling.

Please indicate from the list below the top three reasons why you selected the U.S. allopathic medical college that you are attending.

Randomized order

- Osteopathic philosophy
- College's approach to learning and teaching
- College's faculty
- College's geographic location,
- Cost
- Campus environment
- College's reputation
- College's admission process
- College's prestige factor
- Prefer to have MD degree
- Opportunities for specialty selection

Did you complete an application to one or more offshore allopathic medical schools MD-granting – Caribbean, European, or other)?

Y/N

If yes, to how many offshore allopathic medical schools did you apply?

- 1
- 2-5
- More than 5

Were you offered admission to any of the offshore allopathic medical schools?

Y/N

If yes, how many offers of admission did you receive?

- 1
- 2-5
- More than 5

Please indicate from the list below the top three reasons why you selected the offshore allopathic medical college that you are attending.

Randomized order

- Osteopathic philosophy
- College's approach to learning and teaching
- College's faculty
- College's geographic location,
- Cost
- Campus environment
- College's reputation
- College's admission process
- College's prestige factor
- Prefer to have MD degree
- Opportunities for specialty selection

Do you plan to reapply for enrollment to medical college in 2010?

- Yes, to osteopathic medical colleges
- Yes, to U.S. allopathic medical colleges
- Yes, to offshore allopathic medical colleges
- No

Please indicate when you definitely decided you wanted to study medicine.

- Before high school
- During high school
- During first two years of college
- During junior year of college
- During senior year of college
- After receiving bachelor's degree
- After receiving advanced degree

Please enter any comments about the application process that you would like to share with us.

GPA and MCAT data

	Overall GPA	Total MCAT Score
All respondents	3.44	26.1
All non respondents	3.41	25.3
Admitted DO	3.50	27.3
Not admitted DO	3.32	24.7
Admitted and enrolled DO	3.50	26.6
Admitted and not enrolled DO	3.56	28.7
Applied U.S. allopathic	3.48	27.0
Not applied U.S. allopathic	3.36	24.1
Admitted U.S. allopathic	3.56	28.9
Applied and not admitted U.S. allopathic	3.39	25.8
Enrolled U.S. allopathic	3.58	29.1