

Nephrology Fellows' Job Market Experiences: Findings from the 2015 Nephrology Fellow Survey



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BACKGROUND

- Nephrology has experienced declining fellowship match rates in recent years driven in part by perceptions of a poor job market
- The specialty relies heavily on international medical graduates (IMGs) to fill fellowship slots
- IMGs' experiences in the nephrology job market relative to US medical graduates (USMGs) are not well understood

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

- To compare job market experiences of IMG and USMG nephrology fellows using data from the 2015 Nephrology Fellows Survey

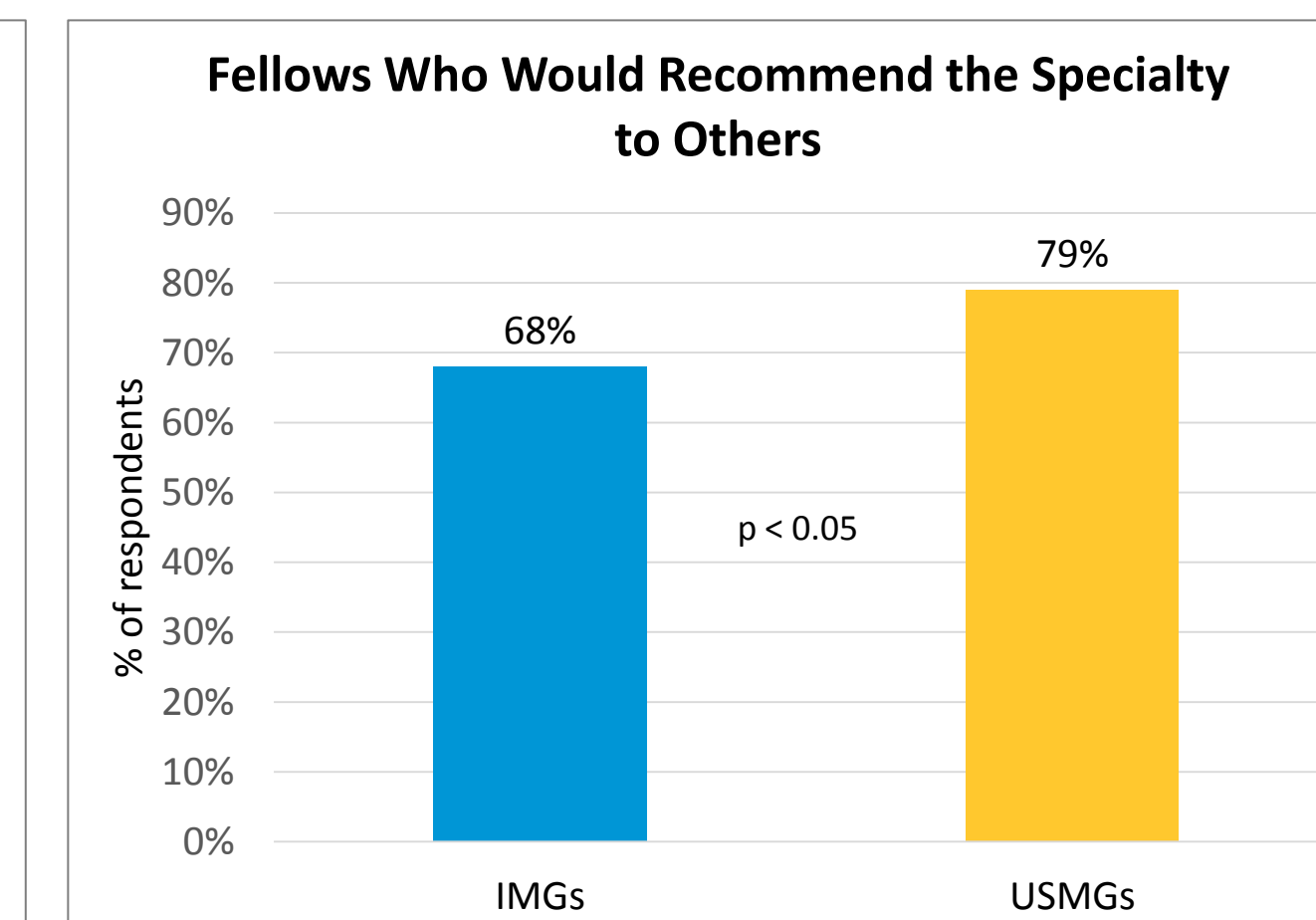
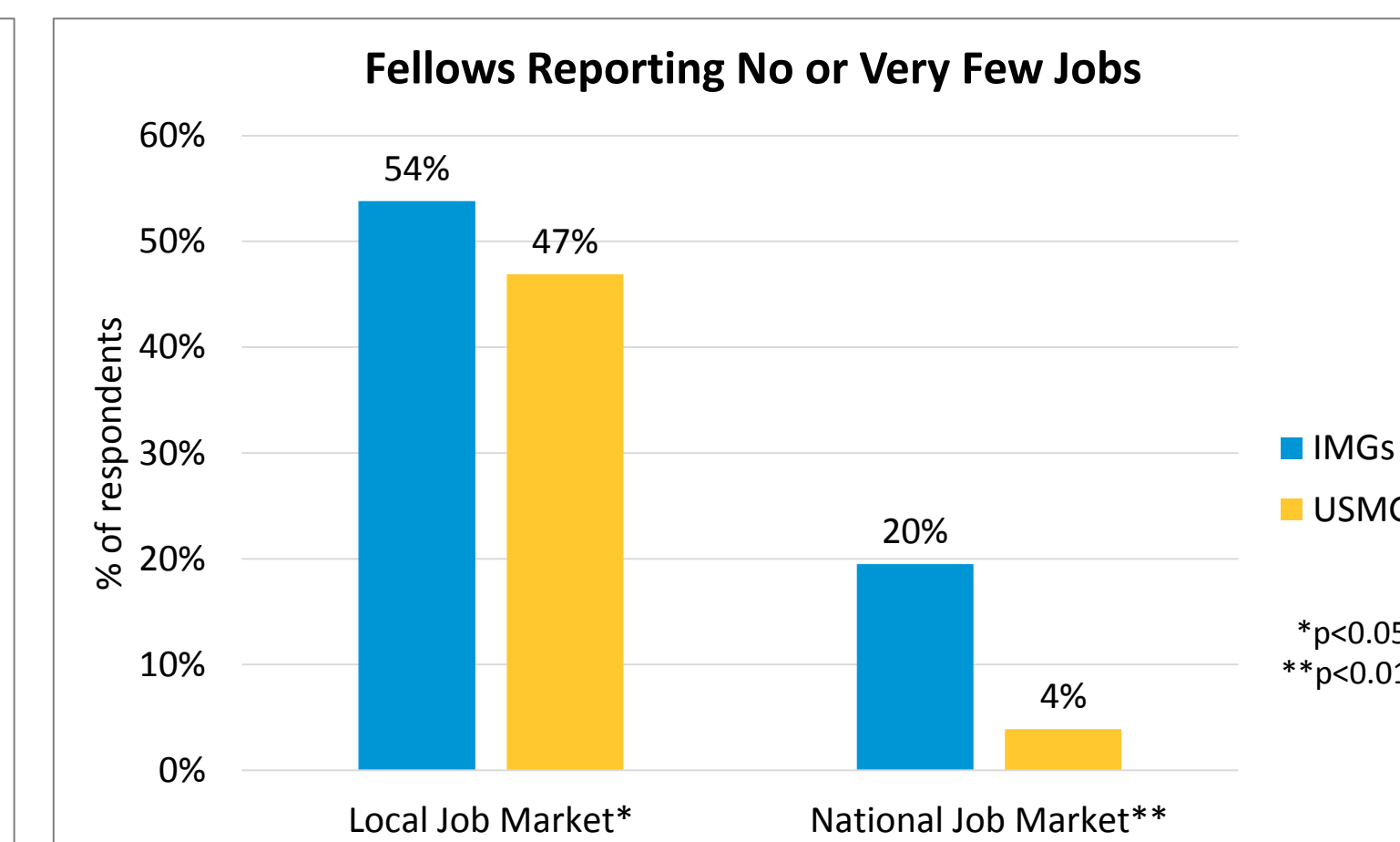
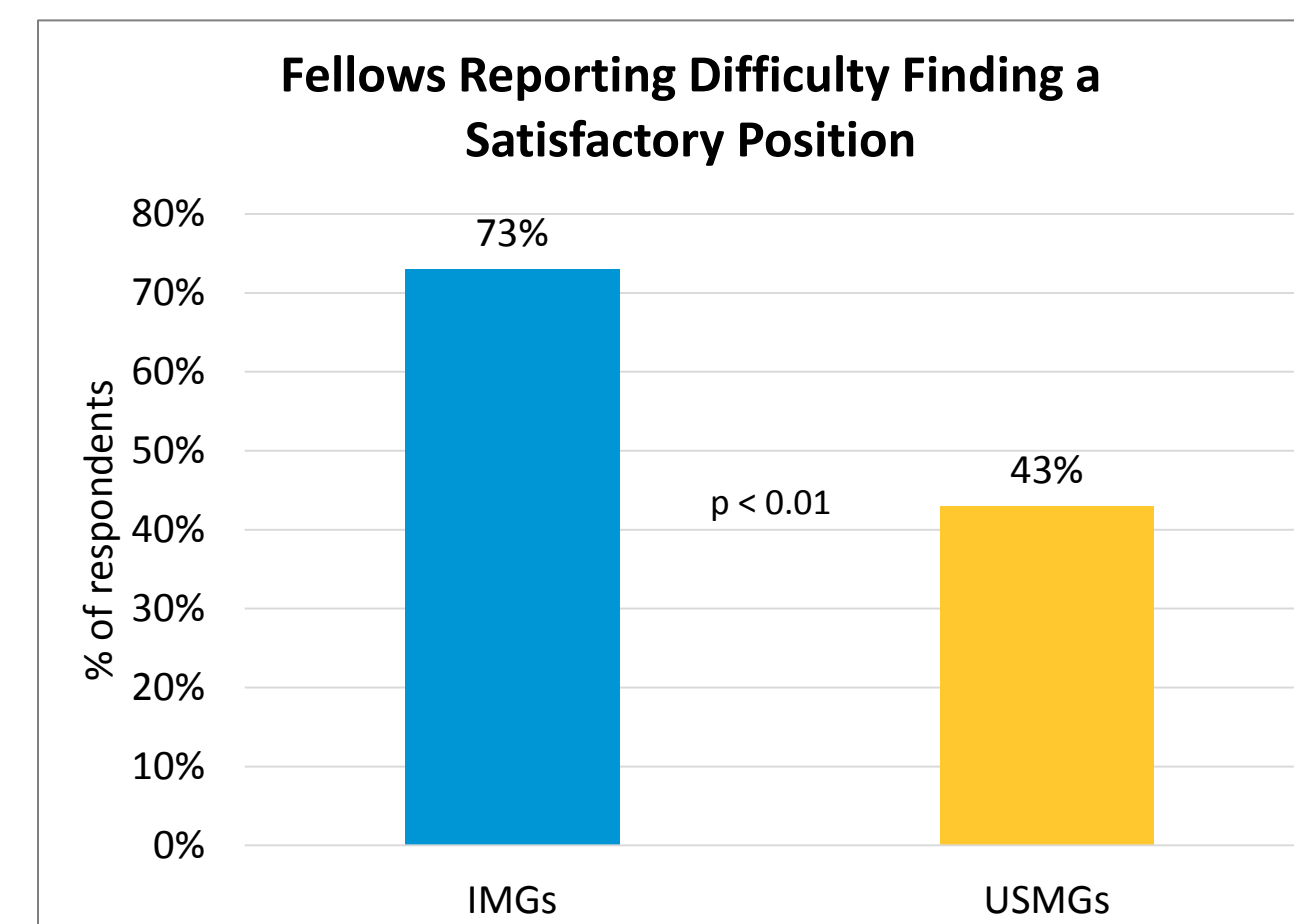
METHODS

- 2015 Nephrology Fellow Survey:
 - Online survey of nephrology fellows' training and job market experiences
- Respondents (n=375):
 - Fellows in 1st and 2nd year of training (325 of 895 total fellows—36.3% response rate)
 - Fellows in 3rd, 4th and 5th year of training (n=50)—subspecialty training or research positions
 - Majority of respondents (64%) were IMGs
- Performed descriptive and comparative analyses of survey data between IMG and USMG respondents using Stata 13

PRINCIPAL FINDINGS

Nephrology fellows who are IMGs are:

- Significantly **older** than USMGs (mean=34.3 vs. 32.5—p<0.01)
- Less likely to have **educational debt** than USMGs (29% vs. 78%—p<0.01)
- More likely than USMGs to indicate having obligations to work in **Health Professional Shortage Areas** (24% vs. 1%—p<0.01)
- More likely than USMGs to report applying for **large numbers of jobs** (35% vs. 8% for 10+ jobs—p<0.01) and **changing plans** because of limited opportunities (56% vs. 23%—p<0.01)



CONCLUSIONS & IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

- IMGs' job market experiences as they complete training are markedly more difficult than USMGs' experiences
- IMGs make an important contribution to nephrology care in underserved areas, but they also encounter significant challenges in finding satisfactory job opportunities
- Nephrology's reliance on IMGs to fill fellowship slots coupled with the difficulties IMGs encounter on the job market—particularly the dearth of positions supporting visas—suggests a mismatch between the specialty's training pipeline and job market
- If opportunities for IMGs to enter US graduate medical education are reduced, new ways to incentivize physicians to enter specialties such as nephrology and/or service in underserved areas may be needed