Association Between Financial Status and Matching into Urology Residency: A Cross-Sectional Analysis

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INTRODUCTION

- In 2022, the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) reported that the median student debt for medical graduates rose to approximately $200,000.

- The AAMC also reports that by 2025, the US will see a shortfall of up to 35,600 primary care physicians as increased loan burdens draw students to choose higher-paying specialty fields such as urology.

- Debt poses a significant burden on medical students potentially influencing career decisions as well as career opportunities.

- Little is known of the interplay of wealth, household income, level of debt and cost of applying to residency on the urology residency selection process.

OBJECTIVES

- To determine the association between financial status and successful matching into urology residency in the 2020-2021 Urology Residency Match.
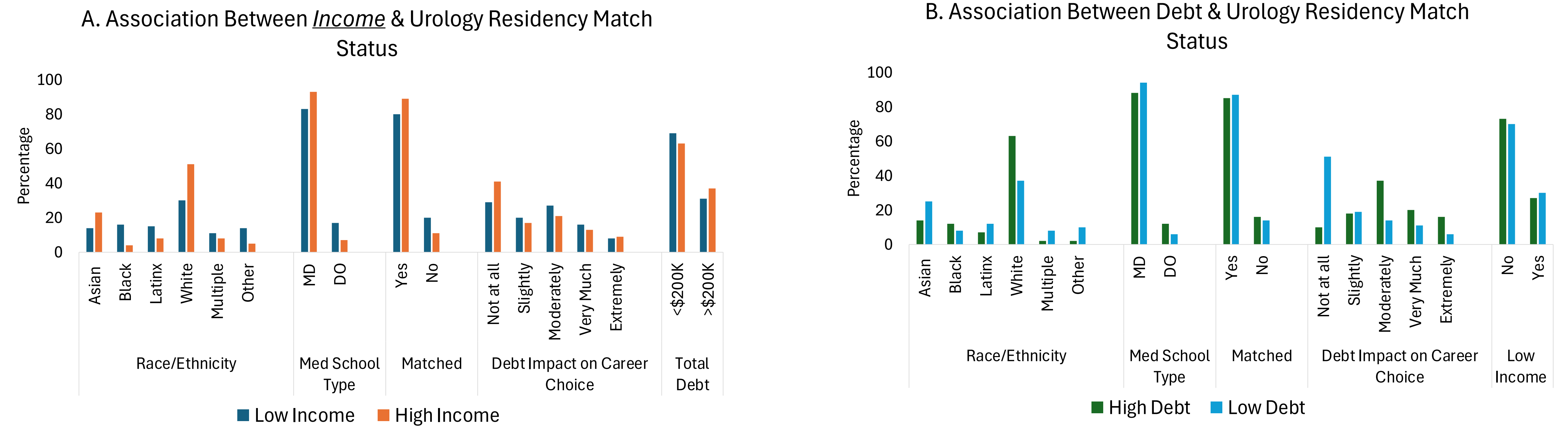
METHODS

- An online survey was distributed to urology applicants who participated in the 2020-2021 Urology Match, administered by the Society of Academic Urologists (SAU).

- Survey responses on payment methods, income, debt, and match status were examined.

- For household income classification, the US National Congressional Budget Office 2020 quintiles were employed. Applicants were classified as *"Low Income"* if household income fell within the lowest two quartiles i.e. less than $67,521 in 2020)

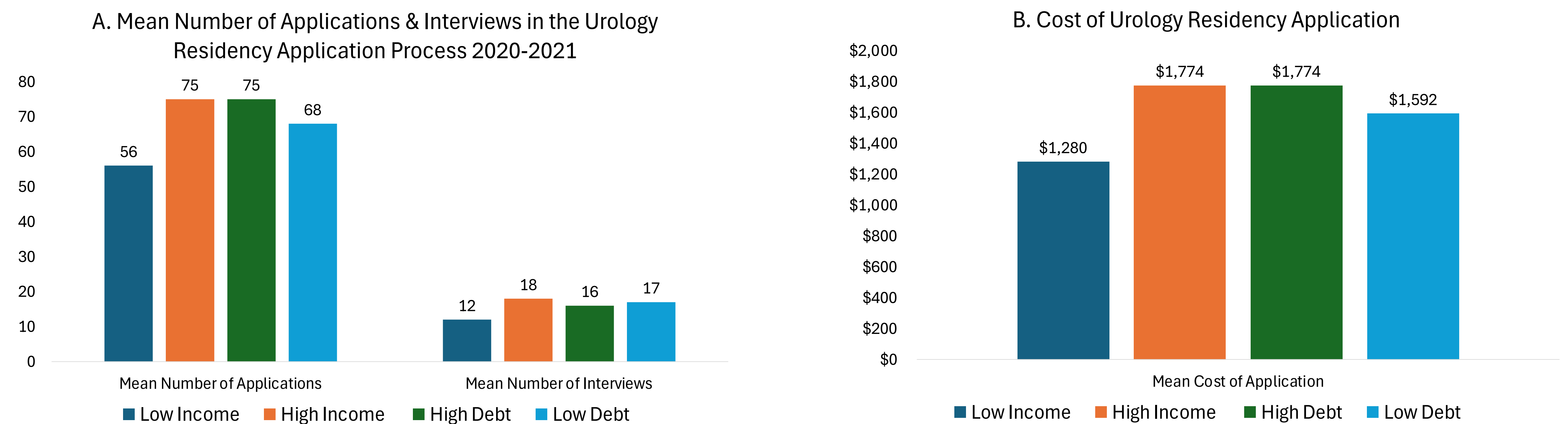- Descriptive statistics were used to compare relevant variables.

FUNDING

RESULTS

Figure 1. The Impact of Income & Debt on the 2020-2021 Urology Match Outcome

A. Association Between *Income* & Urology Residency Match Status

B. Association Between Debt & Urology Residency Match Status

Figure 2. Applications, Interviews & Associated Cost for Urology Applicants of Varied Household Income & Debt

A. Mean Number of Applications & Interviews in the Urology Residency Application Process 2020-2021

B. Cost of Urology Residency Application

KEY FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS

- Survey completion rate was 73% (386 out of 528 respondents) for the 2021 Urology Match Year.
- Individuals from *Low Income* households are less likely to Successfully Match compared to their peers (80% vs. 89%).
- Applicants from *Low Income* homes are less likely to say Debt does not impact their career choices compared to those from higher income homes (29% vs. 41%).
- *Low Income* applicants are more likely to be DO students compared to higher income applicants (17% vs 7%).
- Though applicants with high debt match at equivalent rates as those with lower debt (85% vs 87%), those with high debt are less likely to say debt as no impact on their career choices (10%) compared to their peers with lower debt (51%).
- Debt does not impact application or interview numbers; however, low-income applicants who submit fewer applications, secure fewer interviews, and have the lowest match rate.
- The interplay between financial constraints and the subsequent impact on the successful residency selection process underscores the need for a comprehensive examination of the multifaceted challenges faced by aspiring urologists, with a particular focus on mitigating barriers to entry for individuals from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds.