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Appendix 1. Supplementary tables

Table S1. Qualitative analysis of the impact of the observership program

a)

Interest in a surgical career		Factors related to career choice			
		Lifestyle	Type of practice	Skills required	Work environment
Diminished or no impact	n (%)	3 (18.8)	4 (25.0)	4 (25.0)	2 (12.5)
	Quote	“The schedule and work-family balance remains a priority.” (student 124)	“It was small structures that requires fine work which I’m less interested in.” (student 16)	“I do not believe I am patient enough.” (student 65)	“The work conditions.” (student 42)
Increased or confirmed	n (%)	8 (11.8)	22 (32.4)	4 (5.9)	21 (30.9)
	Quotes	“Being able to talk with the surgeon about her personal life.” (student 5)	“The concrete results of an operation.” (student 113)	“The precision and concentration it requires fascinated me.” (student 25)	“The collaboration between the various professionals (surgeon, anesthesiologist, nurse) is a very stimulating aspect [...]” (student 61)

n: Number of students

b)

Interest in a surgical career		Prior perceptions of the surgical field			
		Pace	Climate	Patient-doctor relationship	Type of practice
Diminished or no impact	n (%)	7 (43.8)	5 (31.3)	1 (6.3)	11 (68.8)
	Quote	“Demanding environment.” (student 125) “Quite busy.” (student 16)	“Strict expectations towards the students.” (student 16)	“The help relationship that surgery brings.” (student 4)	“I have the impression it is a very stressful environment [...]” (student 106)
Increased or confirmed	n (%)	25 (36.8)	16 (23.5)	4 (5.9)	39 (57.3)
	Quotes	“An expeditious field that requires long hours with little time for breaks.” (student 17)	“Rigor and discipline must reign.” (student 61)	“Environment which can sometimes focus more on the human body than on the patient.” (student 18)	“Highly stressful environment where people perform under high pressure.” (student 110)

n: Number of students

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c)

Interest in a surgical career		Perceptions of the surgical field after the observership			
		Pace	Climate	Patient-doctor relationship	Type of practice
Diminished or no impact	n (%)	4 (25.0)	1 (6.3)	1 (6.3)	5 (31.3)
	Quote	“It confirmed my impression that surgeons work a lot.” (student 42)	“I have to admit that I was a bit prejudiced about surgeons, [...] but I loved my day!” (student 135)	“Less ‘intimate’ contacts with the patient.” (student 56)	“Quite a stressful environment.” (student 106)
Increased or confirmed	n (%)	11 (16.2)	10 (14.7)	10 (14.7)	10 (14.7)
	Quotes	“Very demanding indeed, there are time constraints. [However], I believe that a healthy life balance is possible.” (student 107)	“The collegiality and humor I’ve witnessed during my observership allowed me to ease my expectations of the surgical field.” (student 49)	“pleasantly surprised of the proximity of surgeons with their patients. Caring was of the highest importance to establish a trusting relationship.” (student 127)	“Even more diverse practice than I thought.” (student 110)

n: Number of students

Table S2. Qualitative analysis of student’s appreciation of the observership

a)

Participant’s objective	n (%)	Quote
Intellectual curiosity	83 (51.9)	“Discover the surgical field.” (student 65)
Daily work	46 (28.8)	“[Learn about] the lifestyle, patient follow-up, etc., and see a typical day.” (student 10)
Career choice	42 (26.3)	“See if it could be a specialty I would like to work in later.” (student 95)
Academic purposes	31 (19.4)	“Observe surgeries before clerkship to understand the general functioning, and not to be completely disoriented during my surgical clerkship.” (student 18)

n: Number of students

b)

Concerns regarding the experience	n (%)	Quote
Lack of knowledge	39 (24.4)	“Not to have sufficient knowledge, to look uninformed, not being intelligent enough to be in surgery.” (student 17)
Interaction with the surgical team	27 (16.9)	“To bother the surgical team.” (student 40)
Quality of the exposure	12 (7.5)	“Not to be exposed to anything because there are too many residents and clerks present.” (student 76)
Physical response	17 (10.6)	“To faint in the operating room.” (student 28)

n: Number of students