

The impact of medical student research as a discussion topic during the residency interview process

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Background

Research shows that medical students with a greater number of research projects are more likely to successfully complete the National Residency Match. 57% of allopathic medical schools have incorporated a scholarly research project (SP) into their curriculum. As a result, completion of a SP has the ability to provide applicants with an advantage during the residency interview process.

Research Question

Does the Scholarly Project at the University of Arizona College of Medicine Phoenix provide fourth year medical students with a meaningful discussion topic during their residency interview? The primary outcome was the percentage of residency interviewers who asked students about their scholarly project. Secondary outcomes included the percentage of residency interviewers who asked students about their scholarly project based on type of specialty, competitiveness of specialty, project publication status, project presentation status, amount of additional research undertaken, project topic relatedness to specialty, and type of residency programs the student interviewed with.

Methods

123 UACOM-P students from the class of 2019 and 2020 completed a 16-question IRB approved survey after the completion of residency interviews before the Match. The survey examined the student's scholarly project and whether they completed additional research. Survey participants were asked to quantify how many residency interviewers asked about their scholarly project or additional research during the interview process. The survey also determined if students published or presented research at a national conference, whether the research topics related to the specialty sought by the medical student and the types of residency programs applied to by

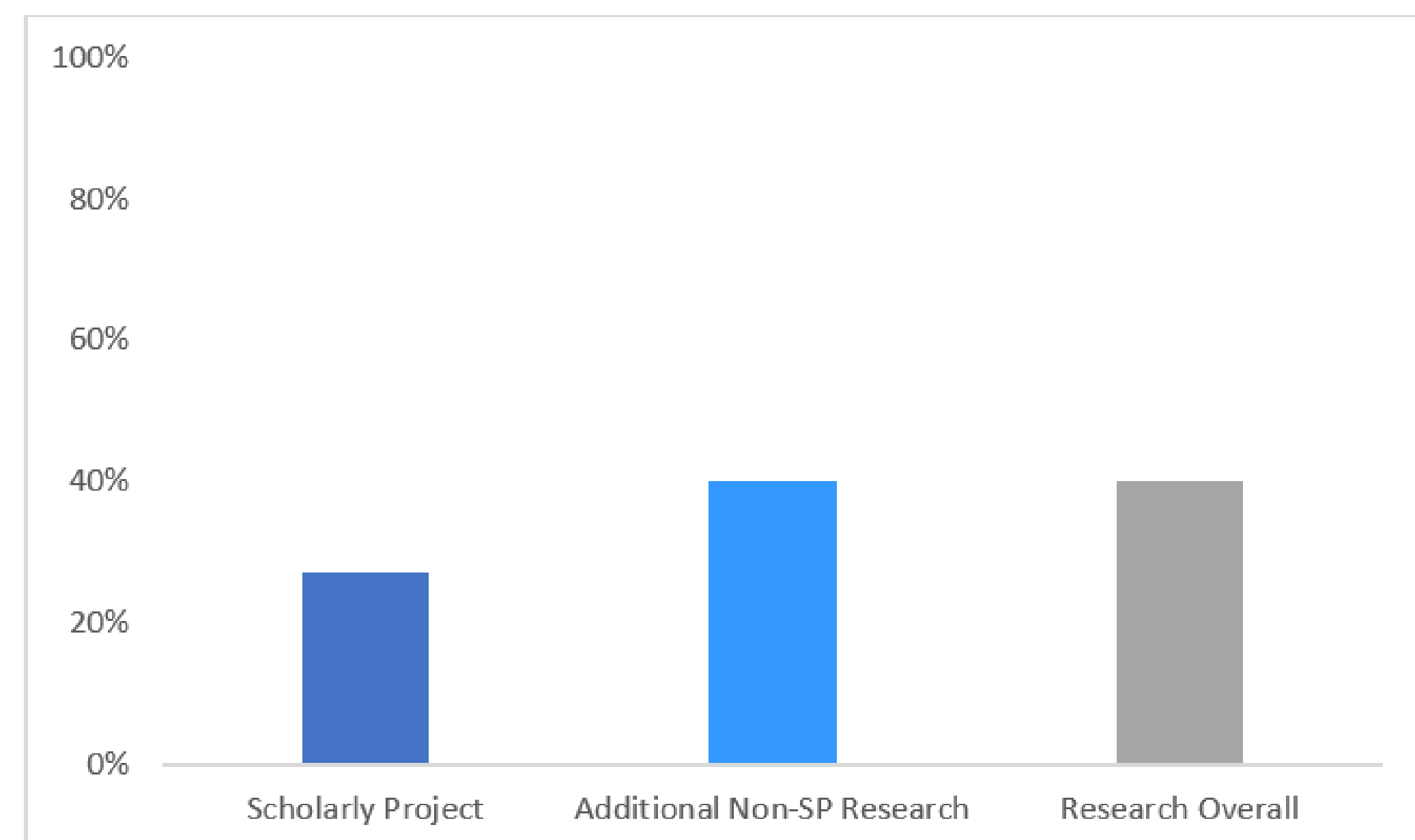


Fig 1. Percentage of residency interviewers who asked students about their scholarly project (27%), additional non-SP research (40%) and research overall (40%).

Results

- The survey response rates for the Class of 2019 and 2020 were 92.5% and 74.3% respectively, overall response rate of 82.6%
- Graduating medical students reported that 27% of residency interviewers asked about their required SP, 40% of interviewers asked about their research projects outside of their original SP, and 40% asked about research overall to include SP and/or non-SP research (Fig 1).
- There were no significant differences in the proportion of interviewers asking about the SP based on the type of specialty, competitiveness of specialty, publication/presentation status of project and topic relatedness of project (Fig 2A-E).
- There was a significantly greater number of interviewers (50%) who asked students about their SP if they had undertaken additional research outside of their SP compared to those interviewers (29%) who asked students about their SP if they did not undertake additional research, $p = 0.0237$ (Fig 2F).
- There was a significantly greater number of interviewers (31%) at predominantly academic programs who asked students about their SP compared to interviewers (22%) at predominantly non-academic programs, $p = 0.0054$ (Fig 2G).

Conclusion

Student research experiences may serve as a meaningful discussion topic during the residency interview. Approximately one-third of interviewers ask about the scholarly project regardless of specialty, topic, and publication/presentation status of project. Students with additional research experiences beyond their scholarly project may experience up to half of interviewers asking about their scholarly project whereas students applying to community programs with less academic/research focus may experience fewer questions about research compared to their peers. These findings have implications for both medical students as they choose research projects to undertake and medical schools as they evaluate the role of research within their curriculum.

Acknowledgements

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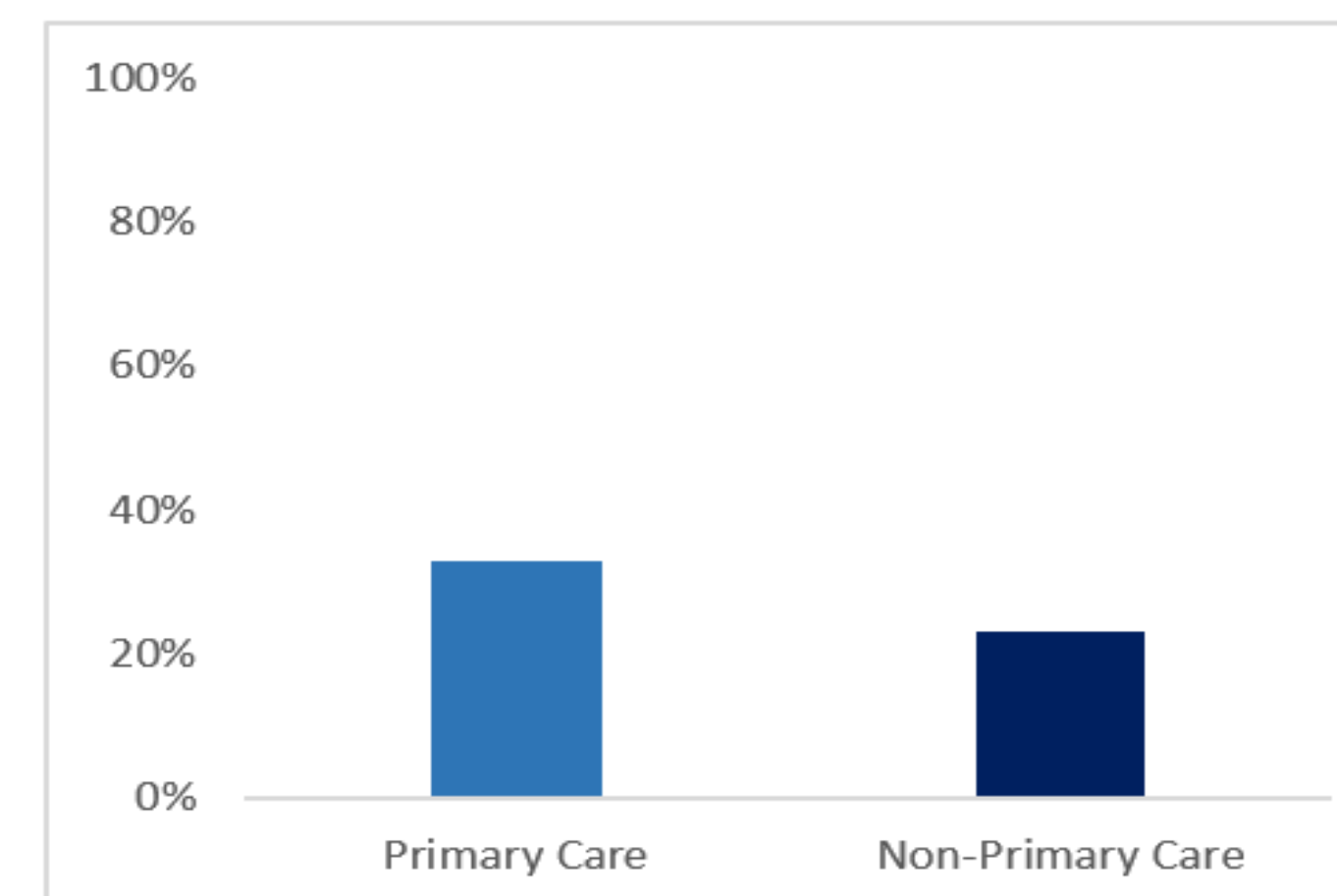


Fig 2A. 33% of interviewers asked students in primary care specialties (n=50) about their SP compared to 23% of interviewers of students in non-primary care specialties (n=73), $p = 0.2221$

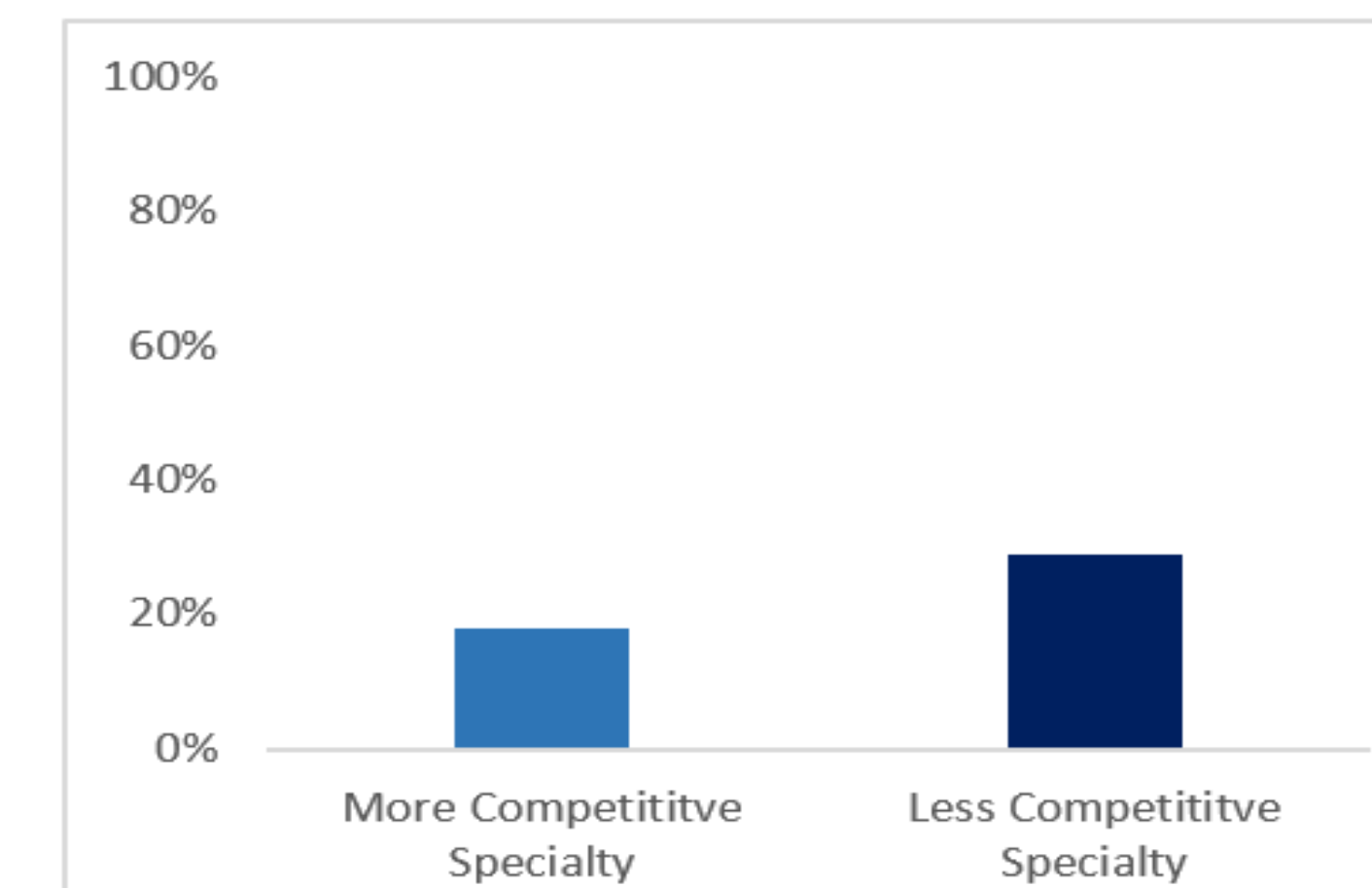


Fig 2B. 18% of interviewers asked students in more competitive specialties (n=23) about their SP compared to 29% of interviewers of students in less competitive specialties (n=100), $p = 0.2856$

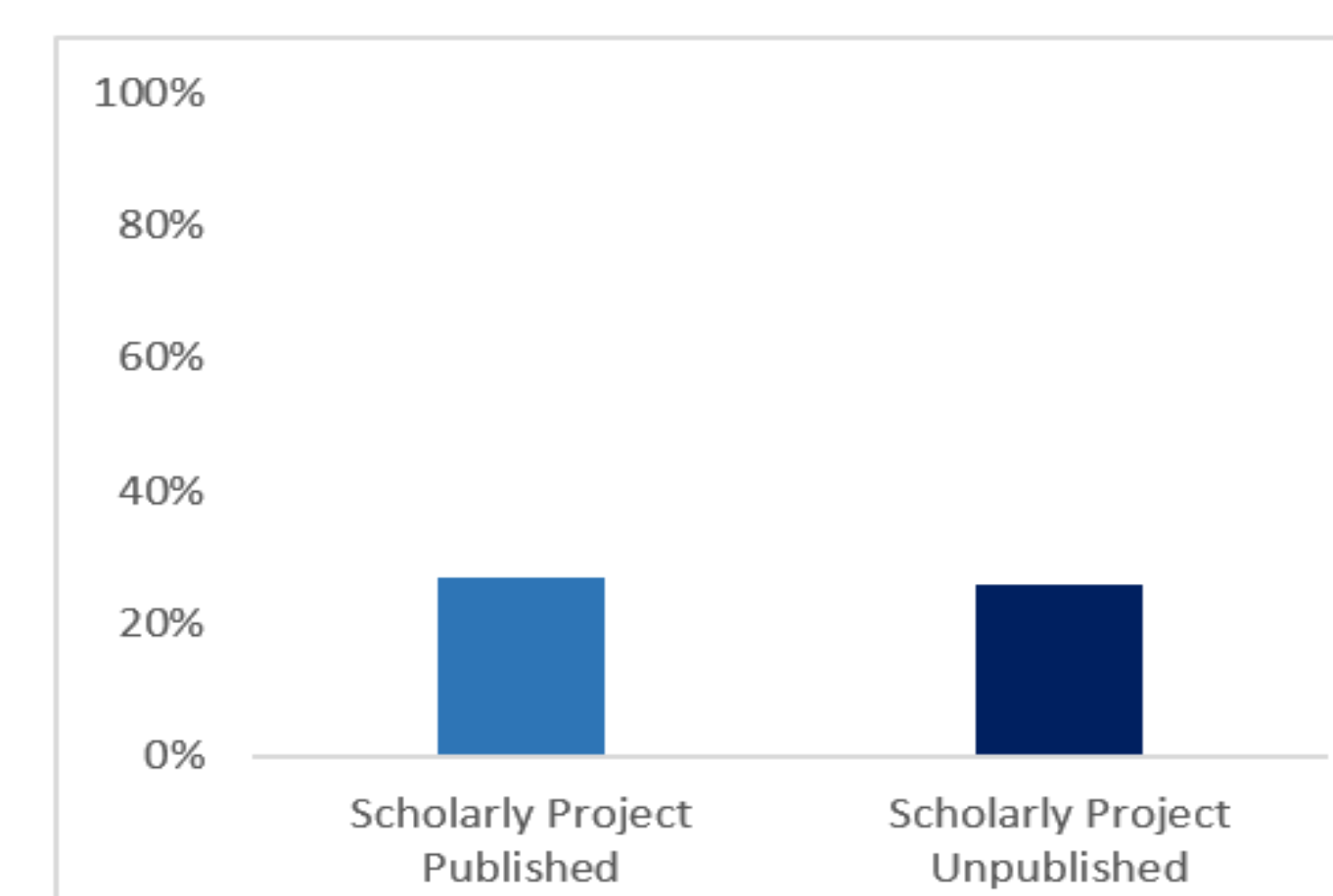


Fig 2C. 27% of interviewers asked students about their SP if it was published (n=59) compared to 26% of interviewers of students who did not publish their SP (n=64), $p = 0.9005$

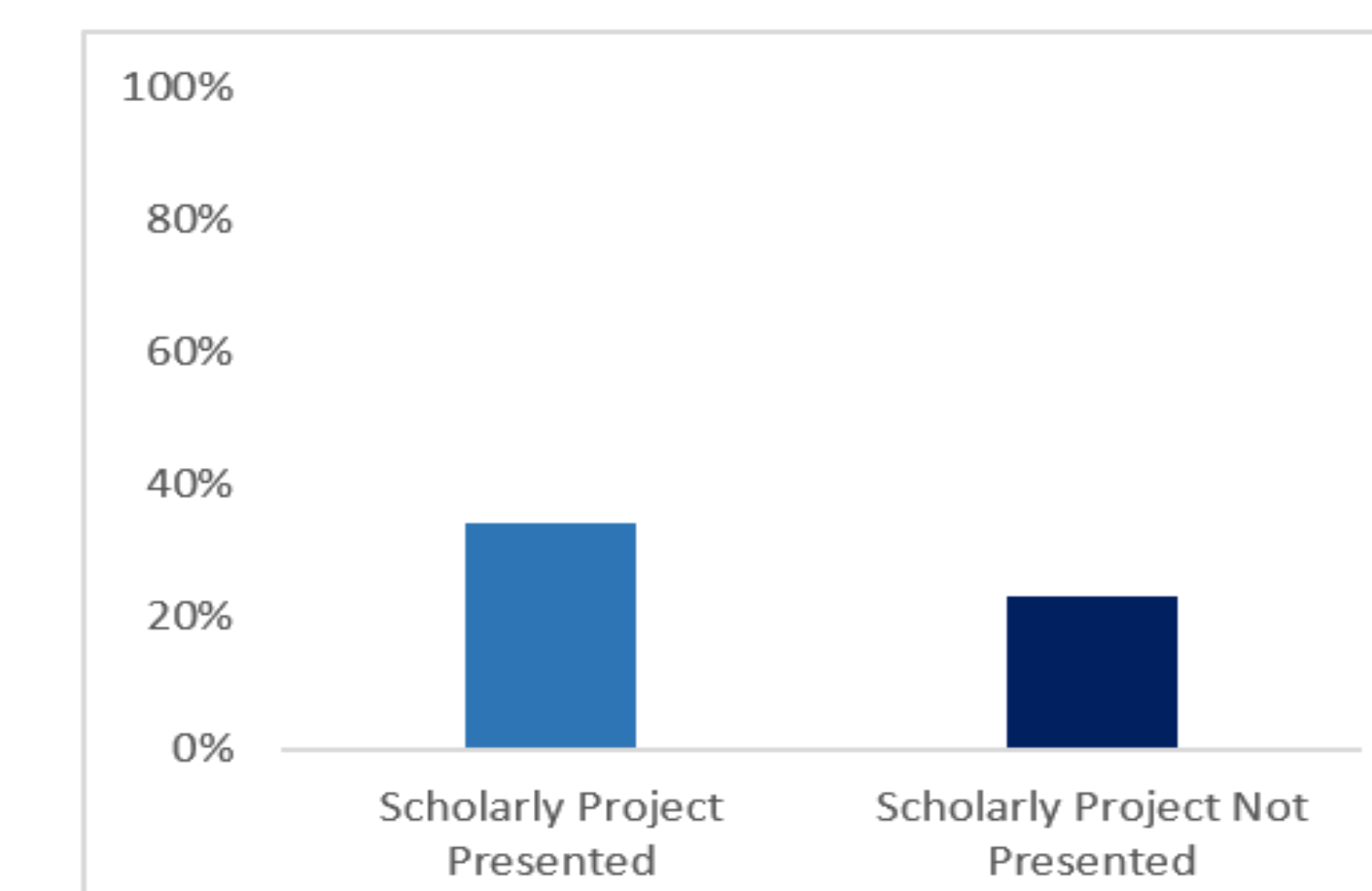


Fig 2D. 34% of interviewers asked students about their SP if it was presented at a national conference (n=45) compared to 23% of interviewers of students who did not present their SP (n=78), $p = 0.1876$

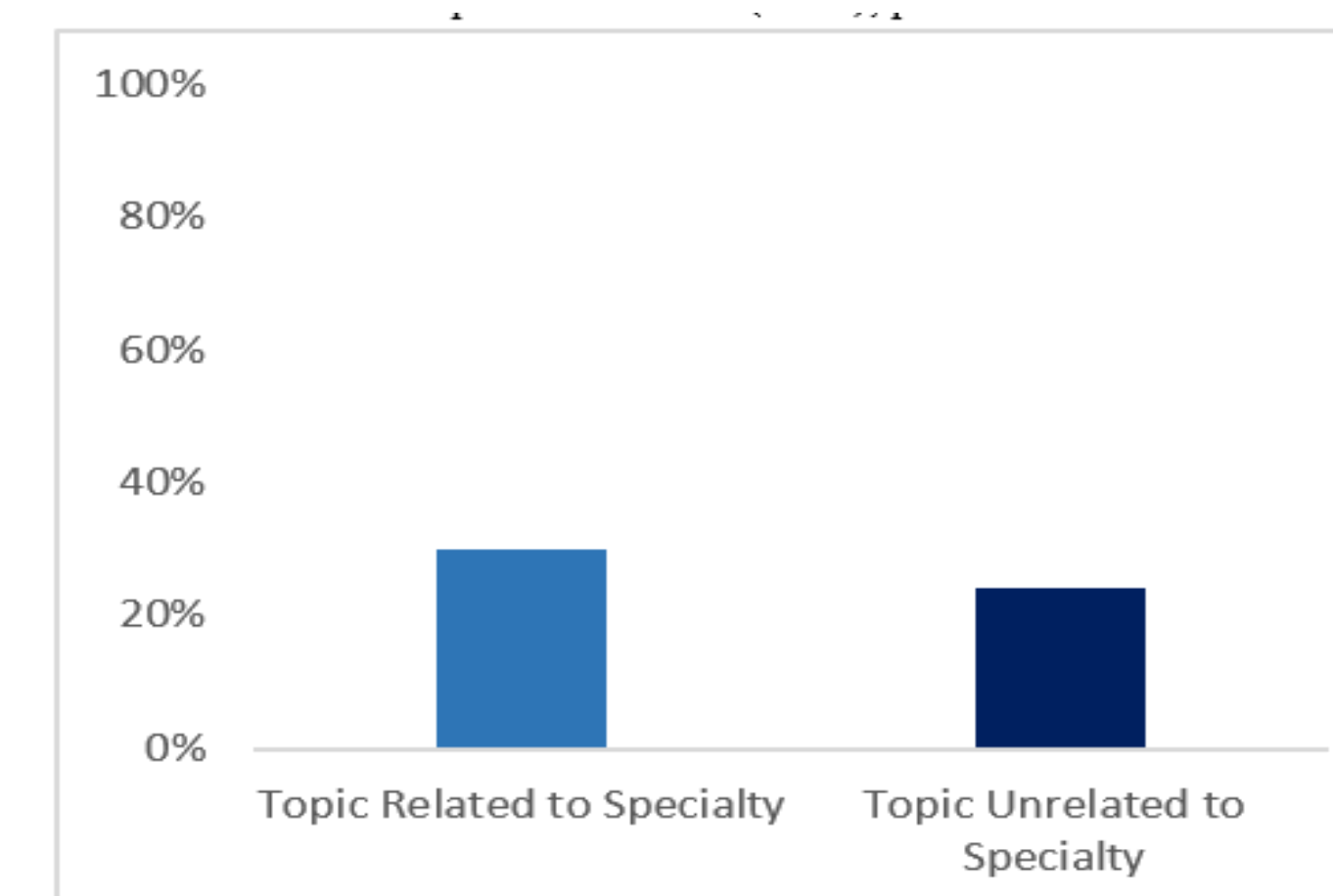


Fig 2E. 30% of interviewers asked students about their SP if the topic was related to the specialty (n=58) compared to 24% of interviewers of students who did not present their SP (n=65), $p = 0.4553$

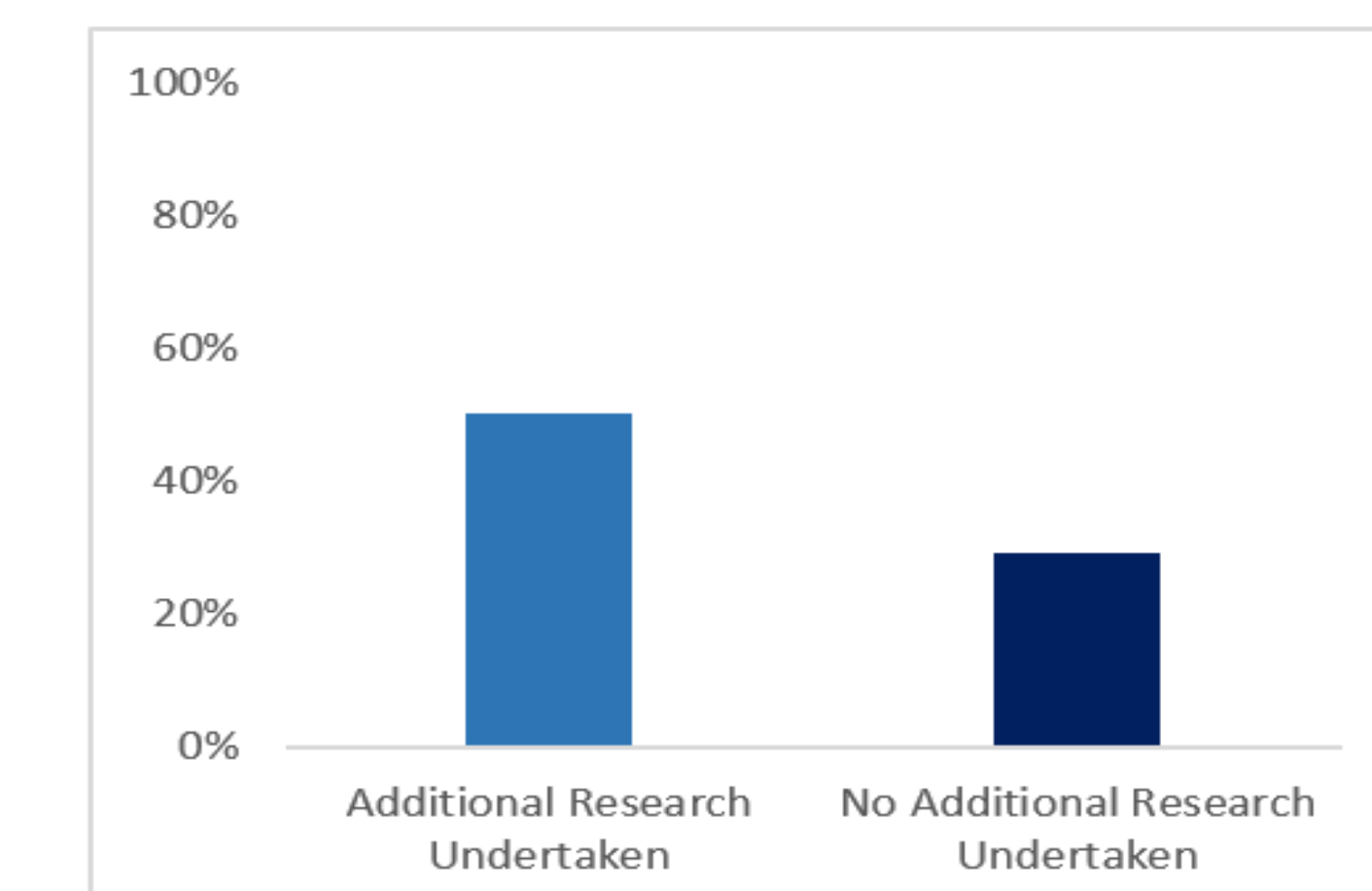


Fig 2F. 50% of interviewers asked students about their SP if they had undertaken additional research outside of their SP (n=78) compared to 29% of interviewers of students who did not undertake additional research (n=45), $p = 0.0237$

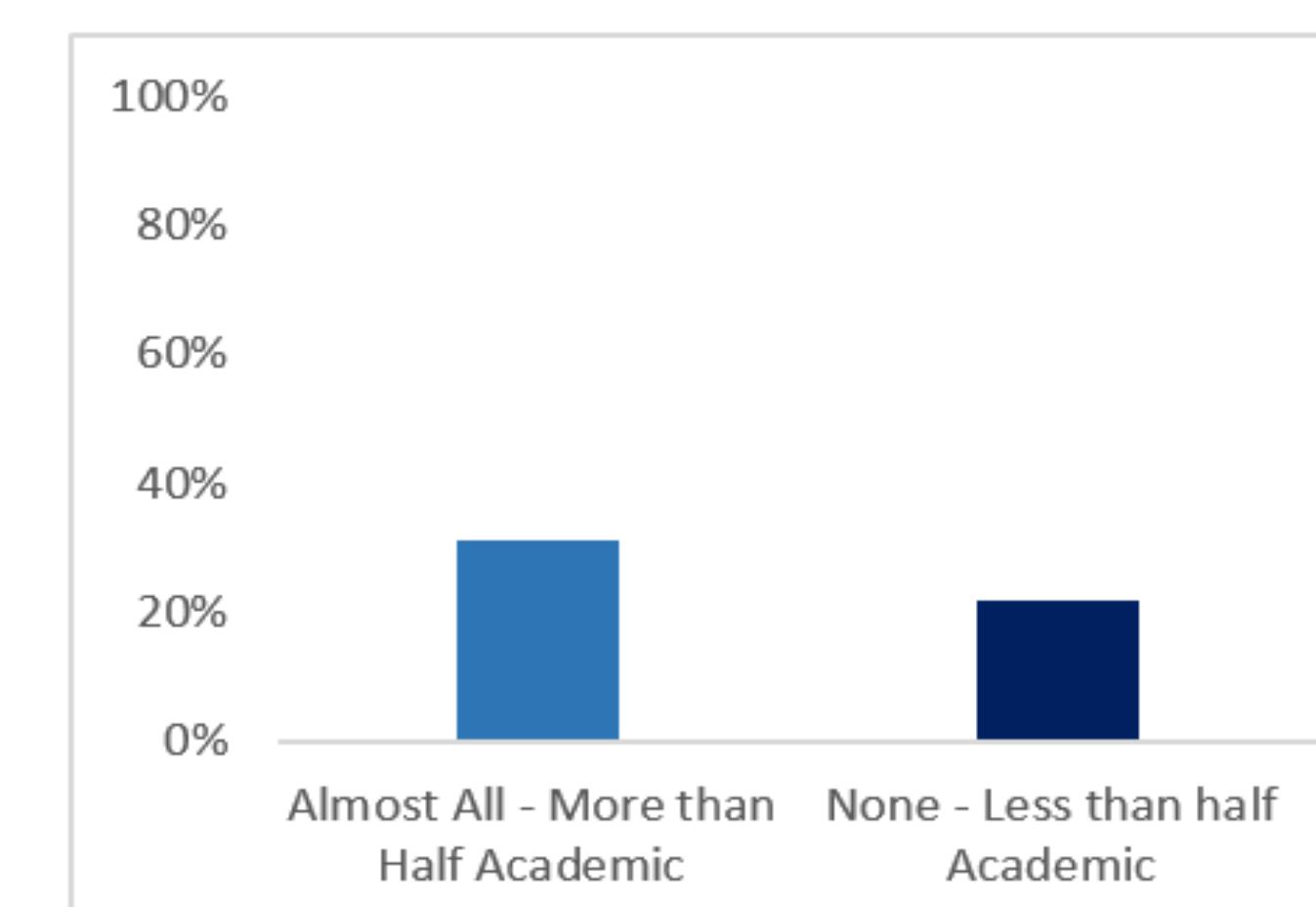


Fig 2G. 31% of interviewers asked students interviewing at predominantly academic programs about their SP (n=62) compared to 22% of interviewers of students interviewing at predominantly non-academic programs (n=27), $p = 0.0054$