



## Exploring the Association between Grit and Career Choice in Thoracic Surgery

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### DESCRIPTION

Grit, defined as perseverance and passion for long-term goals, is increasingly recognized as an essential factor in achieving success across various fields. In medical education, the concept of grit is particularly relevant, given the demanding and prolonged nature of training. Thoracic surgery, a specialized and challenging field within surgery, requires a significant commitment and dedication. This article explores the relationship between grit and the interest in thoracic surgery among medical students, examining how grit influences career choices and success in this demanding specialty.

Grit is a psychological trait characterized by sustained effort and interest over long periods. It encompasses two main components: perseverance of effort and consistency of interest. Perseverance of effort refers to the sustained effort towards long-term goals despite challenges and setbacks, while consistency of interest pertains to maintaining interest and passion for these goals over time. Grit has been linked to various positive outcomes, including academic achievement, job performance, and personal well-being. Medical education is known for its rigor and intensity, requiring students to maintain high levels of motivation and resilience. Grit plays a vital role in helping medical students navigate the challenges of medical school, including demanding coursework, long hours, and high-stakes exams. Studies have shown that students with higher levels of grit are more likely to succeed in medical school and pursue challenging specialties. Grit helps students persist through difficulties, stay committed to their goals, and develop the resilience needed to overcome obstacles. Thoracic surgery involves the surgical treatment of diseases affecting the organs inside the chest, including the heart, lungs, esophagus, and other structures. It is a highly specialized field requiring extensive training and expertise. Thoracic surgeons perform complex procedures, such as lung resections, heart surgeries, and esophageal surgeries, often dealing with life-threatening conditions. The field demands precision, dexterity, and a deep understanding of the intricate anatomy and physiology of the thoracic cavity. Interest in thoracic surgery among medical

students can be influenced by several factors, including exposure to the field during medical school, mentorship, personal interests, and perceived challenges and rewards. Thoracic surgery is often viewed as one of the most demanding and prestigious surgical specialties, attracting students who are motivated by the complexity and impact of the work. However, the high demands and long training period can also deter some students. The relationship between grit and career choice in thoracic surgery is multifaceted. Students with high levels of grit are more likely to pursue and succeed in demanding specialties like thoracic surgery.

Thoracic surgery requires extensive education and training, often involving additional years of residency and fellowship. Students with high grit are better equipped to endure the long and challenging training period, maintaining their motivation and effort despite setbacks. Thoracic surgery is associated with high-stress levels and significant challenges. Gritty students are more resilient, able to cope with stress, and maintain their focus and determination. This resilience is essential for handling the emotional and physical demands of the specialty. Consistency of interest, a key component of grit, is essential for students to sustain their passion for thoracic surgery. Students with high grit are more likely to maintain their interest in the field over time, even when faced with difficult and monotonous tasks.

Gritty students are often more goal-oriented, setting long-term career goals and working diligently towards achieving them. This goal-oriented behavior aligns well with the structured and progressive nature of medical and surgical training. Given the importance of grit in pursuing and succeeding in thoracic surgery, it is valuable to consider how grit can be developed and nurtured in medical students. Exposure to mentors and role models who exemplify grit can inspire and motivate students. Mentors can provide guidance, support, and encouragement, helping students develop perseverance and resilience. Encouraging students to set and pursue long-term goals can help cultivate grit. This involves helping students identify their passions, set realistic and challenging goals, and develop plans to achieve them. Exposing students to challenging and meaningful

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**Received:** 20-May-2024, Manuscript No. JSA-24-26187; **Editor assigned:** 22-May-2024, Pre QC No. JSA-24-26187 (PQ); **Reviewed:** 05-Jun-2024, QC No JSA-24-26187; **Revised:** 12-Jun-2024, Manuscript No. JSA-24-26187 (R); **Published:** 19-Jun-2024, DOI: 10.35248/2684-1606.24.8.250

**Citation:** Erkmen C (2024) Exploring the Association between Grit and Career Choice in Thoracic Surgery. *J Surg Anesth.* 8:250.

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experiences can help develop grit. These experiences can include rigorous coursework, research projects, clinical rotations, and surgical training, providing opportunities for students to persevere and build resilience. Promoting a growth mindset, the belief that abilities can be developed through effort and learning, can enhance grit. Encouraging students to view challenges and failures as opportunities for growth can help them develop perseverance and maintain their interest in their goals. Creating a supportive and collaborative learning environment can help students develop grit. This includes providing emotional support, fostering a sense of community, and promoting work-life balance. Grit is a vital factor in determining success in medical education and surgical

specialties, particularly in demanding fields like thoracic surgery. Medical students with high levels of grit are more likely to pursue and succeed in thoracic surgery, demonstrating perseverance, resilience, and sustained passion for their goals. Developing and nurturing grit in medical students through mentorship, goal-setting, challenging experiences, a growth mindset, and a supportive environment can help them achieve their career aspirations in thoracic surgery. As the medical field continues to evolve, understanding and promoting the role of grit in medical education and career development will be essential for cultivating the next generation of dedicated and resilient thoracic surgeons.