Abstract

Outcome Objectives:
1. Compare the caseloads of graduates from military otolaryngology residency programs to the national averages for the years 2001-2010.
2. Measure residency outcomes by comparing the board exam passing rates of military otolaryngology graduates to their civilian complement.

Methods:
Resident caseload data and board exam passing rates were requested from each of the Department of Defense otolaryngology residency programs for the years 2001-2010. The American Board of Otolaryngology and the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education provided the national averages for resident caseload for those years, as well as national passing rates on the certifying board exam. The pooled numbers from the military programs were then compared to the national averages for total cases, cases in defined categories, and board passing rates.

Results:
Data was available for 5 of the 6 military otolaryngology residency programs. Regarding total cases, only the years 2001 and 2003 showed a significant difference (p=0.05) with military residents completing more cases in those years. For the 10 year averages in individual categories, the military residents reported more cases in Otology/Audiology (299.6 vs. 261.2, p=0.033) and Plastic/Reconstruction (248.1 vs. 149.2, p=0.003). Only the category of Head & Neck showed significance with the national average being greater than the military average (278.3 and 226.0, p=0.039). Military residents demonstrated a first-time board exam pass rate identical to the national average (93%).

Conclusions:
Our results suggest that the military otolaryngology residency programs are equal in terms of caseload and board passing rates as compared to their civilian counterparts over this time period. Military resident caseload has not been compromised by the war effort.

Board Exam Passing Rates

Table 1 depicts the passing rates for first-time takers of the certifying board exam given by the American Board of Otolaryngology. The overall rate and range over the years of 2004-2010 are included. Data from prior years was unavailable.

Table 1. Board Exam Passing Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Total Passing Rate (2004-2010)</th>
<th>National</th>
<th>Military</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td></td>
<td>87-99%</td>
<td>82-100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusions

Our results suggest that the military otolaryngology residency programs are equal in terms of caseload and board passing rates as compared to their civilian counterparts over this time period. Military resident caseload has not been compromised by the war effort.

Figure 1: Figure 1

Figure 2: Figure 2