Study: Most young pediatricians own home despite high debt

New data from the AAP Pediatrician Life and Career Experience Study (PLACES) highlight financial characteristics of pediatricians.

Among early career pediatricians — those who graduated from residency four to six years ago — 78% had household educational debt in 2015. Among these pediatricians with debt, the average is $358,000, and the average monthly payment is $1,276. About one-fourth are earning $200,000 or more a year, and 74% own rather than rent their home (see figure). Most pediatricians (94%) are saving for their retirement; 37% of these pediatricians are saving as much as they would like, and 63% would like to be saving more for retirement.

Across both groups, pediatricians who earn at least $200,000 a year are more likely to own a home and to be on track with their savings for retirement, while those who have higher educational debt are less likely to own a home and be on track with their retirement savings.

“While I think some children do have PANDAS, I just don't know how to help them since the information regarding antibiotic therapy is conflicting,” Dr. Fisher said. “I am patiently awaiting more studies.”

Early studies with a likely selection bias fueled the confusion, Dr. Brick said. In those studies, a few doctors outside of NIMH selected patients with well-established Tourette syndrome or classic OCD symptoms who happened to have a strep infection, rather than patients with sudden-onset severe OCD.

“These patients didn’t respond as expected because they didn’t have PANDAS,” Dr. Brick said. “Some of the doctors who published the initial studies suggesting PANDAS is controversial are now working with us, realizing that maybe the initial studies were studying the wrong patients. It has taken some time to clear up that initial confusion.”

RESOURCES

- For more information on the AAP Pediatrician Life and Career Experience Study, visit www2.aap.org/research/places.htm or contact Mary Pat Frintner, in the AAP Division of Health Services Research, at 847-434-7664 or mfrintner@aap.org.

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