

## Religious affiliation and the intention to choose psychiatry as a specialty among physicians in training from 11 Latin American countries

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The worldwide scarcity of psychiatrists makes the identification of the factors associated with the intention to choose this specialty an important issue. This study aims to evaluate the association between religious affiliation and the intention to choose psychiatry as a specialty among medical students from 11 Latin American countries. We conducted a cross-sectional, multi-country study that included first- and fifth-year students of 63 medical schools in 11 Latin-American countries between 2011 and 2012. The main outcome and measures were the intention to pursue psychiatry as a specialty over other specialties (yes/no) and religious affiliation (without: atheist/agnostic; with: any religion). A total of 8308 participants were included; 53.6% were women, and the average age was 20.4 (SD = 2.9) years. About 36% were fifth-year students, and 11.8% were not affiliated with any religion. Only 2.6% had the intention to choose psychiatry; the highest proportion of students with the intention to choose psychiatry was among students in Chile (8.1%) and the lowest among students in Mexico (1.1%). After adjusting for demographic, family, academic as well as personal and professional projection variable, we found that those who had no religious affiliation were more likely to report the intention to become a psychiatrist [OR: 2.92 (95%CI: 2.14-4.00)]. There is a strong positive association between not having a religious affiliation and the intention to become a psychiatrist. The possible factors that influence this phenomenon must be evaluated in greater depth, ideally through longitudinal research. © The Author(s) 2018.

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