Are You Thinking about Going Back to School? An Analysis of Plastic Surgery Residents, Alumni, Faculty and Program Leaders with Advanced Degrees

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BACKGROUND
- The number of adults with master's, professional and doctoral degrees has doubled since 2000.
- Advanced degrees may allow for greater career advancement and the uptake of leadership positions.

METHODS
- Accredited US plastic surgery training programs were reviewed for faculty, residents, and recent alumni with advanced degrees.
- Degrees were analyzed, including geography, program/hospital ranking, department/division status, gender, leadership roles, specialization training, and academic productivity.

RESULTS
- 986 faculty, 1001 resident, and 761 alumni credentials from 95 training programs were reviewed. 9.3% of faculty, 7.1% of residents, and 6.3% of alumni have advanced degrees, with most being men (71.3%).
- PhD was the most common degree type (38%). Less common were JD and PharmD (1%) (FIGURE).
- Residencies with a top-10 Doximity ranking or those affiliated with a top-10 medical school/hospital have more advanced degrees across faculty, residents, and alumni (p<0.01).
- Faculty holding PhDs are less likely fellowship trained (52.5% vs. 74.0%, p=0.034).
- An MBA is associated with Chair/Chief status (30.0% vs. 8.57%, p=0.01) or another major academic title (eg. Dean, Director) (70.0% vs. 37.14%, p=0.01).
- Trainees on the East Coast (p=0.016) and within a Department (vs. Division, p=0.0028) are more likely to have advanced degrees.

CONCLUSIONS
- Most plastic surgeons with advanced degrees are men and have PhDs.
- MBA Degree is associated with leadership positions.
- Reasons for obtaining an advanced degree and impact on career deserve further attention.

Overall Advanced Degree by Type

- PhD 38%
- MS/MSc 20%
- MPH 17%
- MBA 16%
- MA 5%
- MHPE 1%
- Pharm.D M.Ed 1%