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The Role of Personality and Motivational Factors on Students' Career Intentions for Primary Care and Surgery during their Clinical Training

Background

Evidence highlights the association between career intentions in undergraduate years and definitive career decision. Little is known about factors influencing these intentions.

Our goals were:

1. **To investigate Personality and Motivational factors' impact on Career Intentions (CI) for two specialties –Primary Care (PC) and Surgery (SUR).**
2. **To compare these intentions between years 4 (Y4) and 6 (Y6) students.**

Methods

Sample
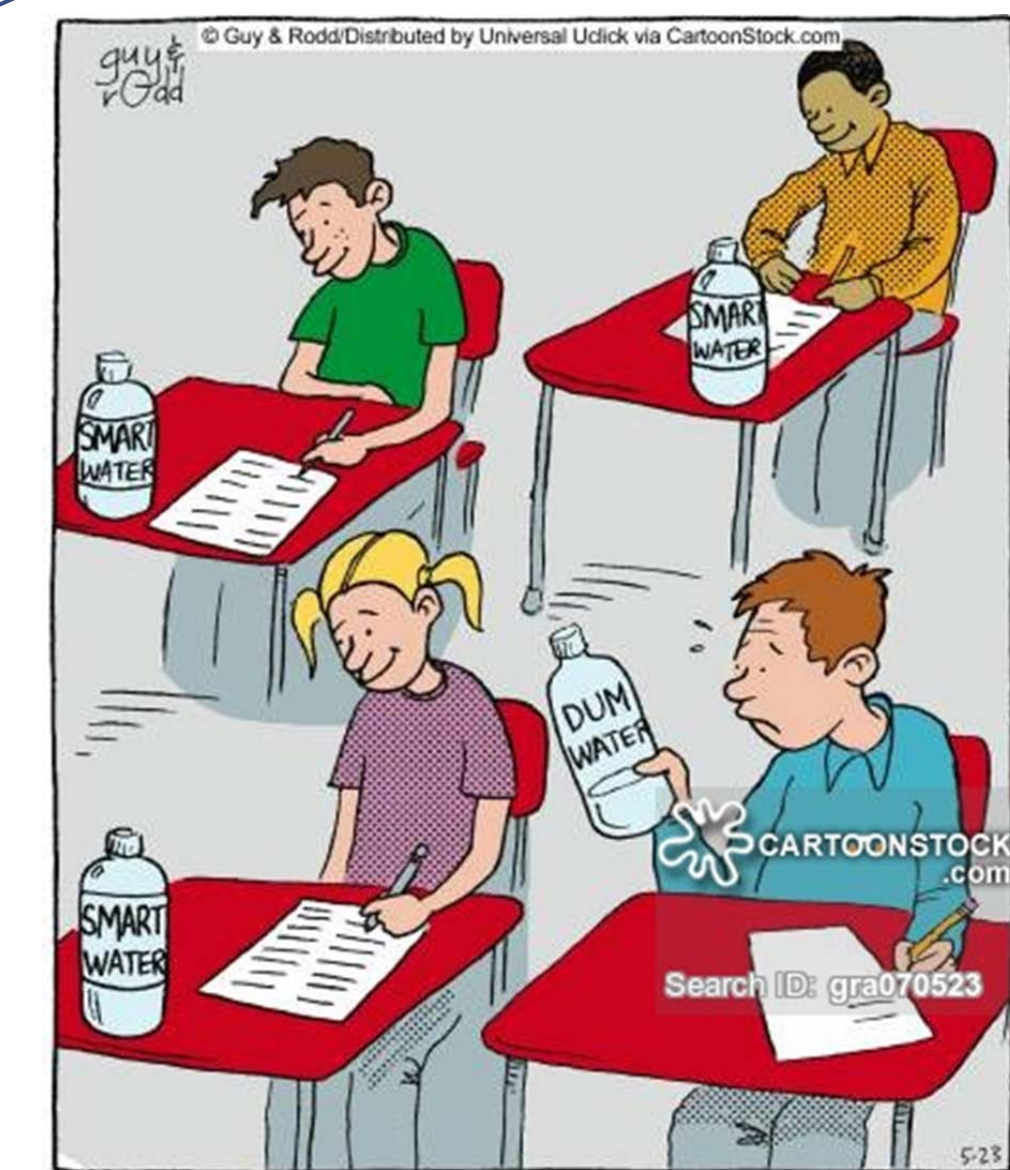- 180 students (87 in Y4, 93 in Y6)

Measures:
- Career intentions, e.g. PC & SUR (0=no, 1=yes)
- Personality (NEO-FFI-R)
- Importance of 5 motivational factors for career choice (1=most important to 5=less important).

Outcome
- Degree of motivation (1=low to 6=high) for PC and SUR .
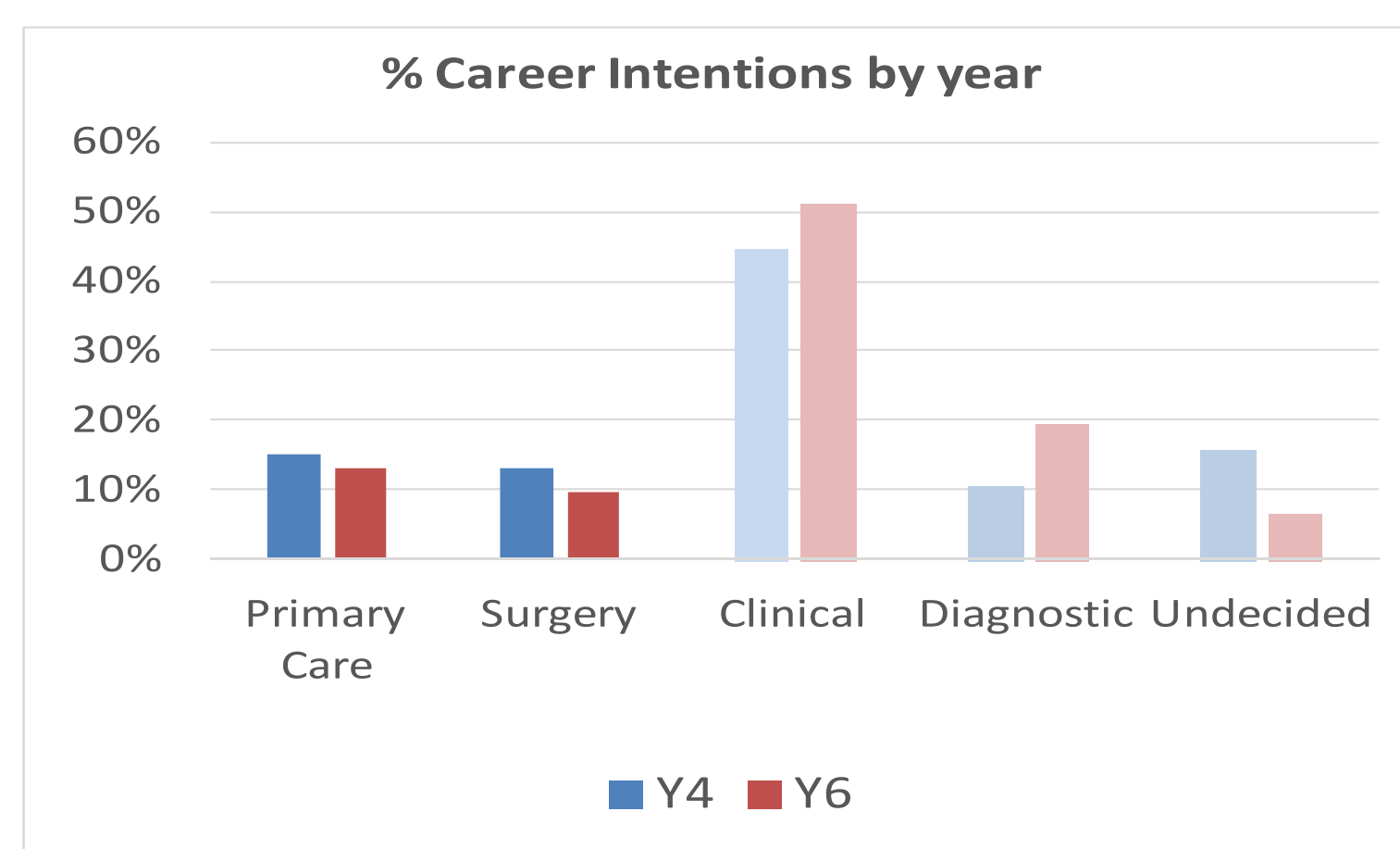
Data Analysis
- Chi-square, ANOVA and linear regression.

- Neuroticism
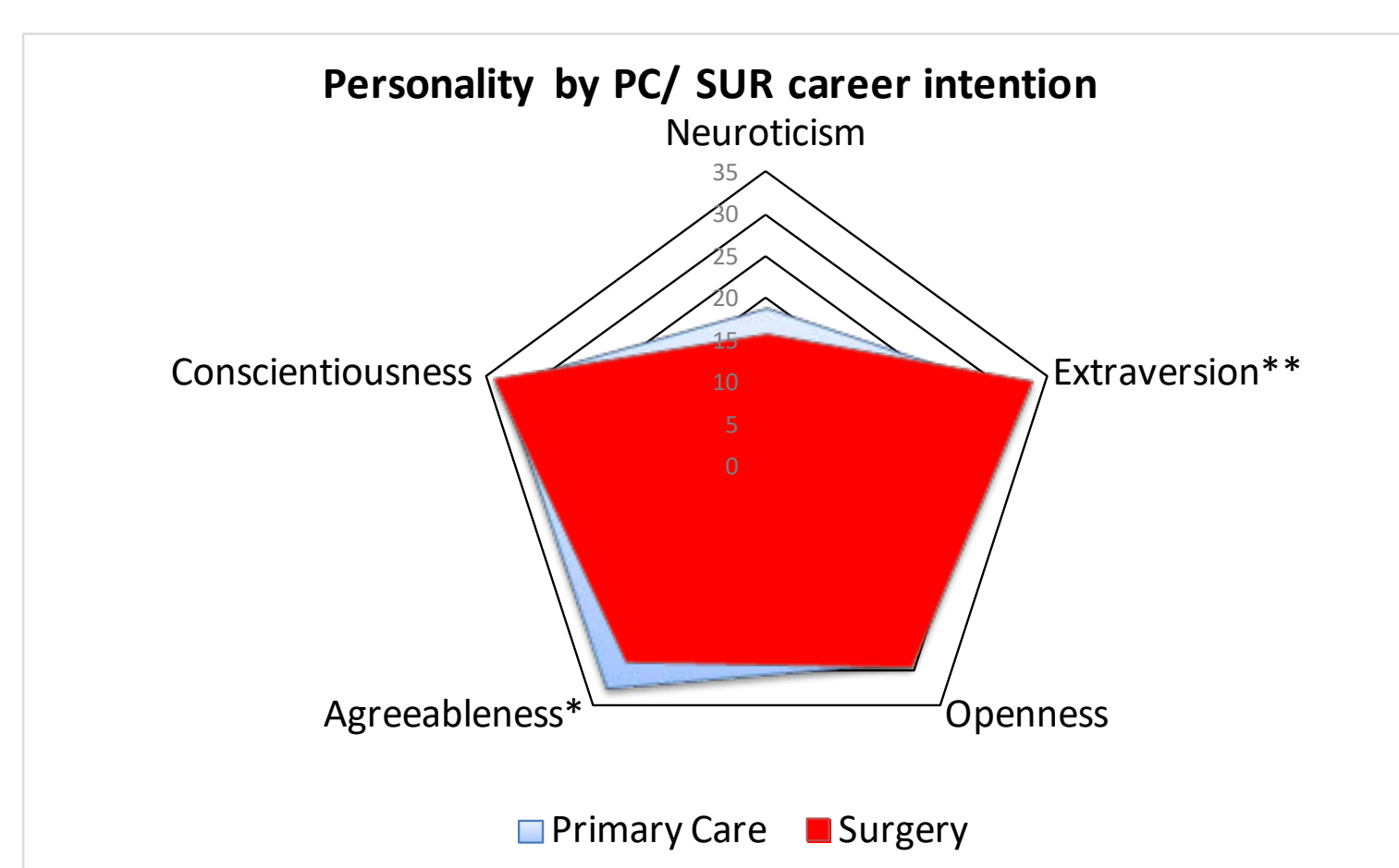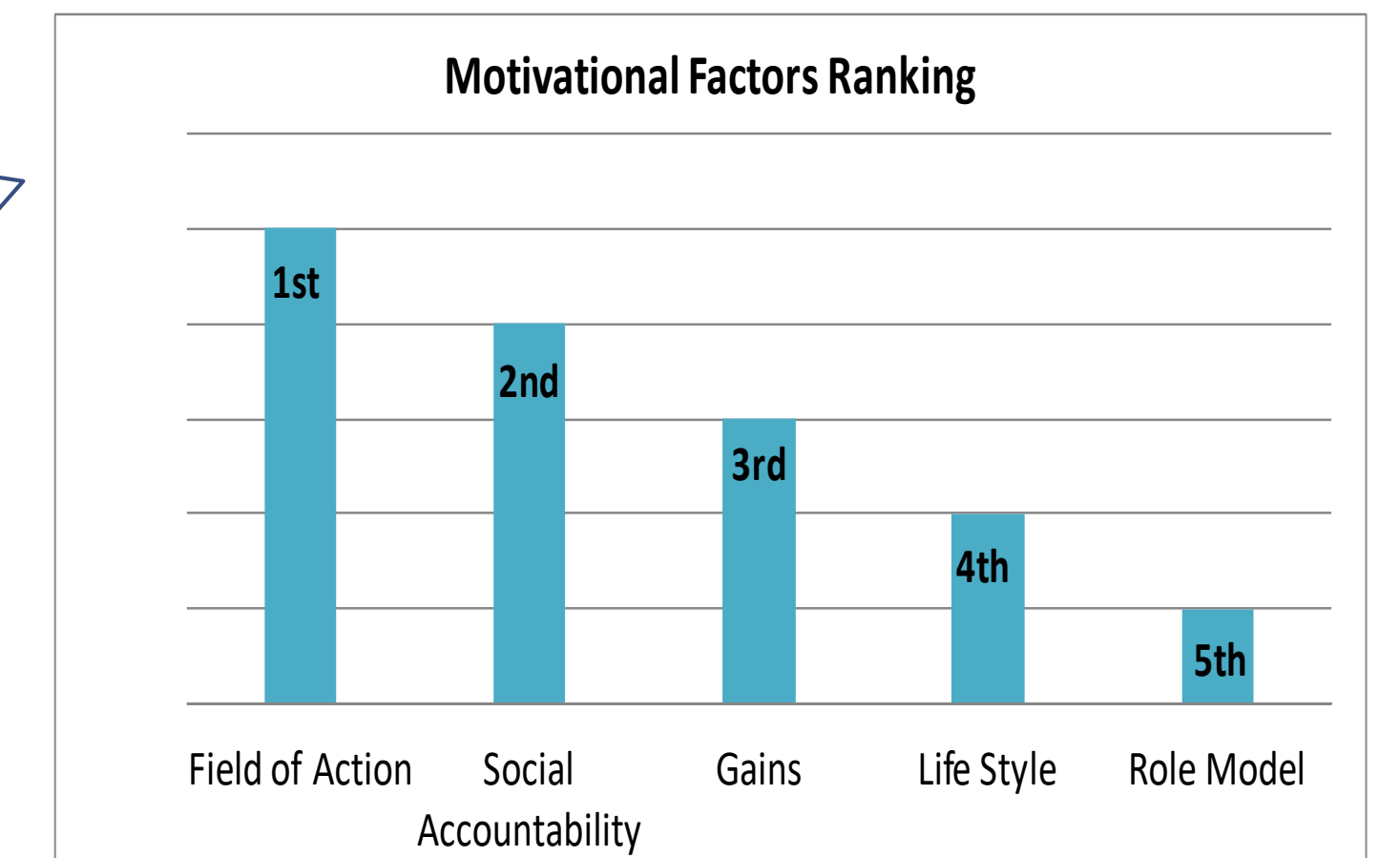- Extraversion
- Openness
- Agreeableness
- Conscientiousness

- Lifestyle
- Field-of-Action
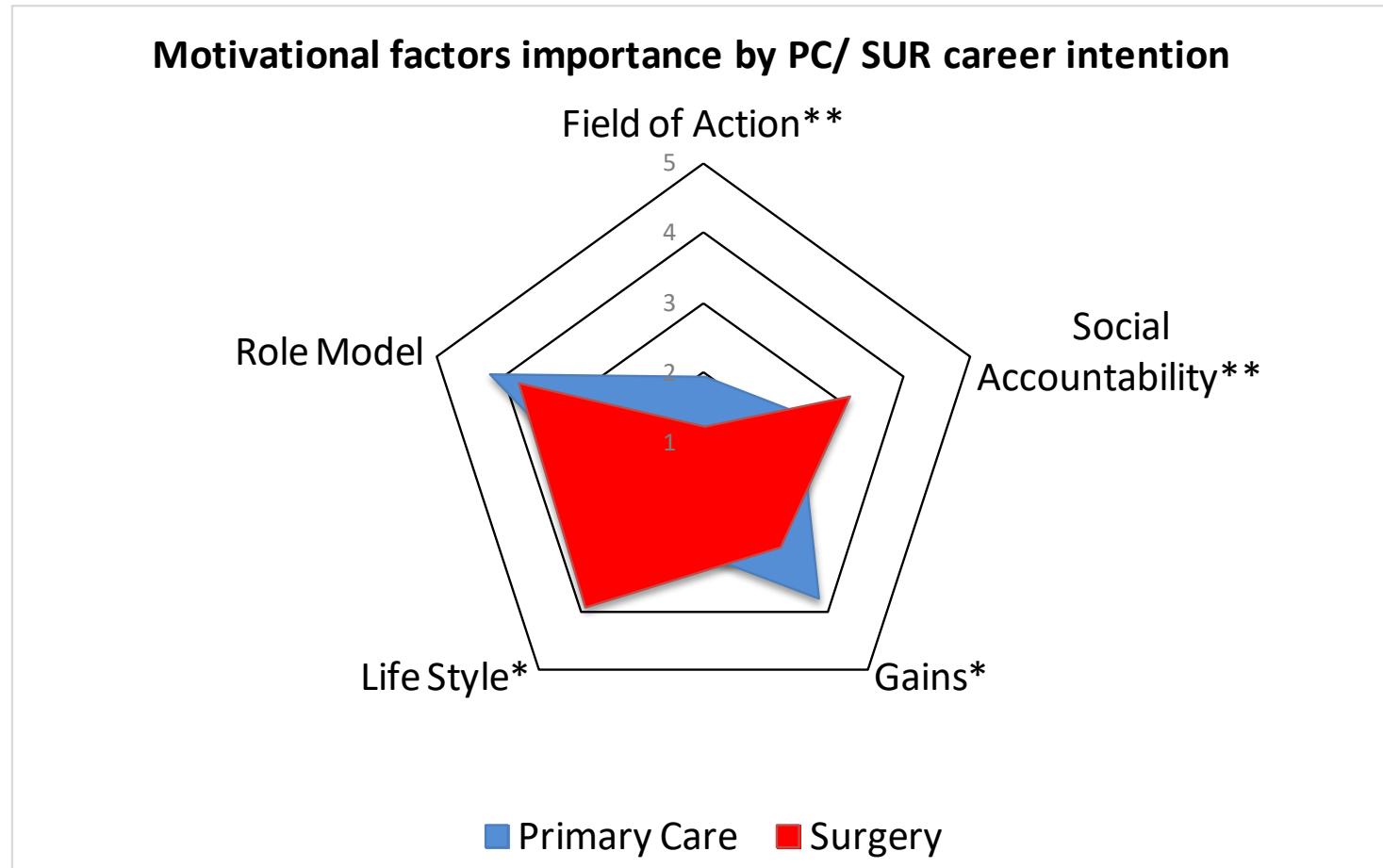- Social-Accountabilty
- Gains
- Role model

Results

% Career Intentions by year

In Y4 and Y6 about 13% intended to choose PC and 10% SUR.

Field of Action was the most important MF for career intentions.

Motivational Factors Ranking — 1st Field of Action, 2nd Social Accountability, 3rd Gains, 4th Life Style, 5th Role Model

Personality by PC/ SUR career intention

Personality importance differed by career intentions (p<.001). PC students showed higher Agreeableness ; SUR students higher Extraversion .

Motivational factors' importance differed by career intentions (p<.001). Social Accountability and Life Style were more important for PC students; Field of Action and Gains for SUR students

Motivational factors importance by PC/ SUR career intention

Prediction of the level of motivation for PC / SUR according to personality motivational factors and gender of Y6 students

Career intentions	PC	SUR
Model/ Adj.R²	.19	.20
Neuroticism	-.19	.03
Extravertion	-.11	.06
Openeness	.12	-.11
Agreablesness	.20**	.05
Consciensouness	-.09	.18
Field of Action	-.16	.21**
Social Accountability	.20**	-.20**
Gains	.08	-.14
Life Style	.12	.15
Role Model	-.13	.08
Gender (M=1; F=2)	.01	-.23**

Regression significant for Y6 only. In Y6, Agreeableness and Social-Accountability predicted PC motivation (β=.20; β=.20, respectively); being a Male, Field-of-Action and negative Social-Accountability predicted SUR motivation (β=.20; β=.21; β=-.25, respectively)

Significance levels: * $p<0.10$, ** $p<0.05$

Conclusions

Students motivated for PC present different personal and motivational features than students motivated for SUR.
We confirm therefore the differences of these 2 career tracks, previously described in the literature as socially-oriented/high-controllable lifestyle (PC) vs medically-oriented/low-controllable lifestyle (SUR).

We identified Y6 as being a crucial moment where Personality and Motivational factors impact the career choice.
We also identified Social-Accountability as a factor to target in order to attract more students to PC.

Take-Home Messages

Our study showed that the proportion of students intended to choose PC were largely insufficient (13%) to fulfill the needs of the aging population in Switzerland (50%). It emphasizes the usefulness of Personality and Motivational factors' investigation in order to better define keener strategies to encourage career choices meeting society requirements.

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