



# USMLE STEP 1 MOVES TO P/F

## A Curriculum Dean's Perspective

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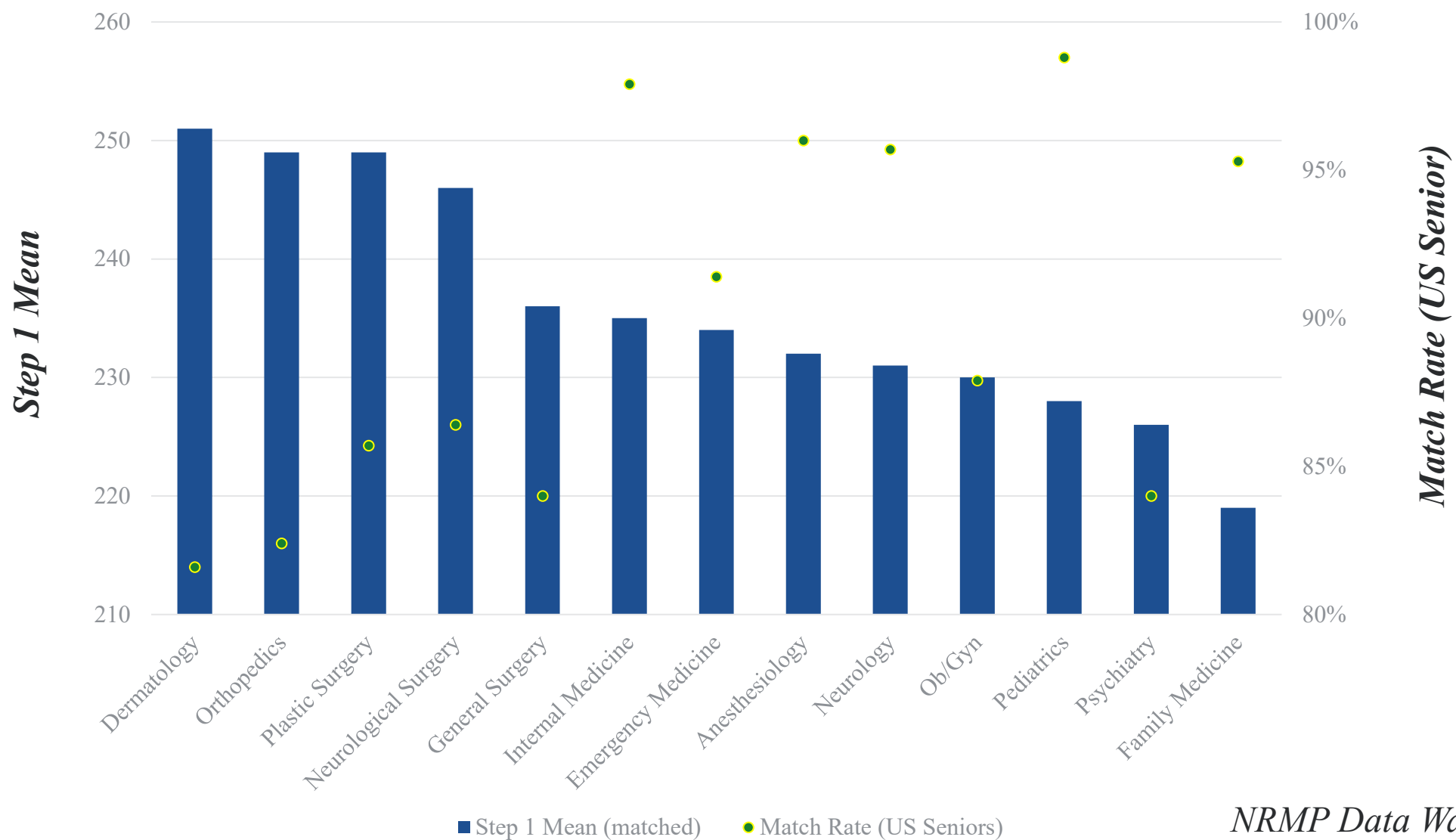
# Opening questions

- I am a... (medical student / resident / teaching faculty / administrator)
- My feelings about Step 1 changing to P/F (generally positive / ambivalent / generally negative)

# Background and Timeline

- Step 1 intended for licensure
- Passing Step 1 predicts passing specialty boards
- Outcome of InCUS conference → switch to P/F no earlier than Jan 2022
- Hoped for improvement in learner wellness





*NRMP Data Warehouse 2020*





*Jean-Simon Berthélemy*



# Background and Timeline

- Step 1 intended for licensure
  - Numerical scores used for residency selection for decades
- Passing Step 1 predicts passing specialty boards
  - Scores beyond passing not correlated with performance
- Outcome of InCUS conference → switch to P/F no earlier than Jan 2022
  - Lack of clarity about actual date
- Hoped for improvement in learner wellness
  - But will this actually happen?



# Isaac Newton

*“And to every action  
there is always an  
equal and opposite or  
contrary reaction.”*



*Godfrey Kneller*





# The curriculum dean's perspective

- Mission / objectives / values / ethics
- Accreditation
- Logistics
- Architecture and engineering
- Faculty development
- Resource management

# Likely Reactions

- Step 1 score no longer used for residency selection →  
Step 2CK score emphasized, development of specialty-specific exams
- Step 1 study time (average ~6 weeks) decreased →  
New dedicated study time for Step 2CK
- Schools that pushed back Step 1 time →  
Will consider shifting earlier again and moving Step 2CK earlier
- More flexibility in teaching foundational, clinical, and health systems sciences early on →  
Potential increased emphasis on NBME Subject Examinations
- Decreased reliance on para-curricular resources in pre-clerkship curriculum →  
Increased emphasis on para-curricular resources in clerkships

# Big Picture

- This move is positive for education
- Must mitigate the “equal and opposite” reactions
- The Gordian knot remains as strong as ever
- Coalition on Physician Accountability → cut the knot!
- Use educational theory and best practices:
  - Competency based medical education
  - Programmatic assessment
  - Assessment for learning
  - Holistic review
  - Anti-racist pedagogy and assessment practices
- Scholarly opportunities abound