

Overview of Osteopathic Medical Education/ Accreditation/The Four-Year Curriculum

An Introduction to Osteopathic Medical Education

Osteopathic medicine is a science-based discipline with a strong philosophical grounding that focuses on the whole person. It follows the French and Italian model of medical education, emphasizing examination and understanding of the people being cared for.

This is in contrast to MD-granting (allopathic) medical schools, which are rooted in the German model of education, emphasizing laboratory-based evaluation of patients. Nevertheless, osteopathic medical school curricula is very similar to those used at U.S. allopathic medical schools, although the exact program will vary by college.

Osteopathic medical school accreditation standards require training in internal medicine, obstetrics/gynecology, pediatrics, family practice, surgery, psychiatry, radiology, preventive medicine and public health. Osteopathic medical schools emphasize early clinical contact. While the first two years focus on the biomedical and clinical sciences, the second two years delve deeper into patient-oriented

clinical training. Most schools include time for elective courses as well.

DO clinical education follows a distributive model, wherein students are exposed to practicing in diverse health-care settings. Although in-hospital experiences are an important aspect of clinical education, osteopathic medical students receive significant training in community hospitals as well as out-of-hospital ambulatory settings. In many schools, a community-based primary care rotation in a rural or underserved area is a required aspect of fourth-year training. For information on each school's curriculum, see the college pages beginning on page 32.

Although osteopathic medical education has changed dramatically since its beginnings in 1874, osteopathic medical schools maintain the core values advanced by the profession's early proponents; these values are held as central distinguishing tenets of osteopathic philosophy and practice: providing care that is holistic, patient-centered, preventive, and focused on health rather than disease, delivered within a primary care context.

The osteopathic medical school curriculum is perhaps most distinguished by the inclusion of osteopathic manipulative medicine (OMM), a hands-on therapy that is used to diagnose and treat people in a primary or adjunctive way, enhancing overall health and the holistic functioning of the human body. OMM education usually occurs through year-long first- and second-year theoretical and skills courses and through subsequent clinical experiences. OMM education is in addition to, and integrated with, medical training on current and emerging theory and methods of medical diagnosis and treatment.

For more information on osteopathic medicine, see the overview beginning on page 7.

Accreditation

Osteopathic medical schools are accredited by the American Osteopathic Association Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation (COCA), recognized to accredit osteopathic medical education by the U.S. Department of Education. See www.osteopathic.org/inside-aoa/accreditation/pages/default.aspx.

Many osteopathic medical schools also are accredited by a regional educational accrediting organization.

New colleges of osteopathic medicine hold provisional accreditation status during their first four years of student enrollment. A college holding provisional accreditation status may admit students and offer medical instruction. During the year preceding the graduation of its first class, a provisionally accredited college will conduct various activities that will allow it to attain fully accredited status. Should the college not gain full accreditation, COCA has policies and procedures in place to protect the educational and financial investments of students.

Year 1	Year 2	Core Clinical Clerkships (Years 3 and 4)	Other Clinical Clerkships (Years 3 and 4)
Anatomy	Gerontology	Emergency Medicine	Anesthesiology
Physiology	Cardiology	Family Medicine	Cardiology
Clinical Skills	Gastrointestinal System	Internal Medicine	Dermatology
Radiology	Hematopoietic System	Obstetrics and Gynecology	Gastroenterology
Osteopathic Principles and Practices	Osteopathic Principles and Practices	Osteopathic Principles and Practices	Laboratory Medicine
Microbiology and Immunology	Pharmacology	Pediatrics	Nephrology
Neuroscience	Endocrinology	Psychiatry and Behavioral Science	Neurology
Histology	Psychiatry	Surgery	Oncology and Hematology
Biochemistry	Respiratory		Orthopedics
Pathology	Ethics and Jurisprudence		Otorhinolaryngology
Doctor/Patient Communication	Family Medicine		Pediatric Subspecialties
	Genitourinary System		Public Health
	Reproductive System		Pulmonary Medicine
	Pediatrics/Growth and Development		Radiology
			Rural Medicine
			Surgical Subspecialties
			Urology

Osteopathic Medicine in Brief

The Four-Year Curriculum

Each osteopathic medical school has its own curriculum. Some are discipline-based, focusing on each science separately. Others allow students to learn through patient-based, or problem-based, learning. Many use a mix of methods.

Osteopathic medical school starts with a foundation in the basic sciences of medicine. In addition, students learn a core set of clinical examination skills and gain an understanding of the various systems of the body. Lectures, laboratories and other learning experiences are designed to prepare students for the clinical portion of medical school—the clinical clerkship years.

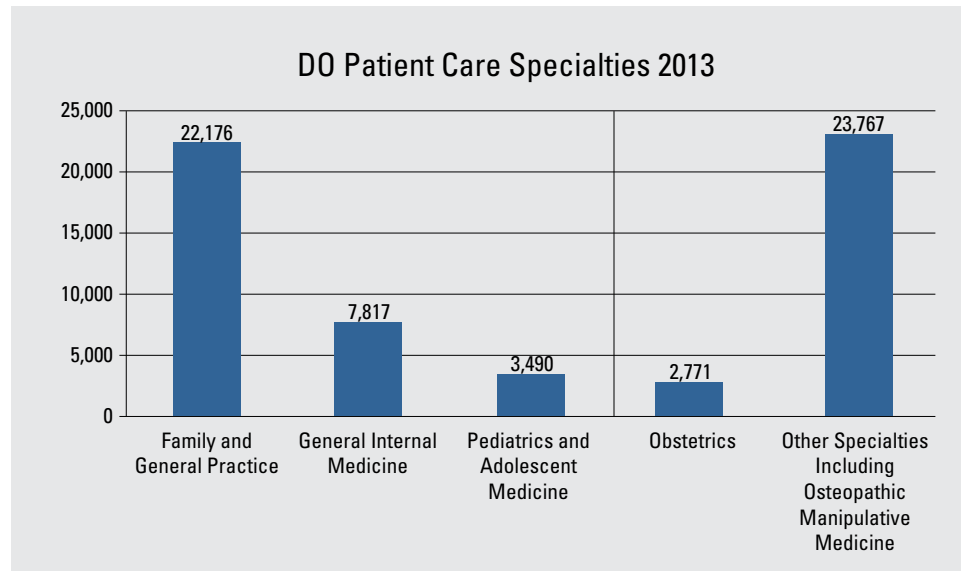
Integration of the basic and clinical sciences through early clinical exposure is an important part of the curriculum. While specific learning methods and curricular offerings vary from college to college, the chart provides a general guide to the material covered in the osteopathic medical school curriculum. Please check the college to which you are applying for specifics.

DOs can choose any specialty, prescribe drugs, perform surgeries and practice medicine anywhere in the United States. Osteopathic physicians bring the additional benefits of osteopathic manipulative techniques to diagnose and treat illness and injury.

The osteopathic medical profession has a proud heritage of producing primary care practitioners. Today, the majority of osteopathic medical school graduates choose careers in primary care.

Osteopathic medicine also has a special focus on providing care in rural and urban underserved areas, allowing DOs to have a greater impact on the U.S. population's health and well-being than their numbers would suggest.

DOs work in partnership with patients to help them achieve a high level of wellness by focusing on health education, injury prevention and disease prevention.



Source: AOA, Osteopathic Medical Profession Report
www.osteopathic.org/inside-aoa/about/aoa-annual-statistics/Documents/2013-OMP-report.pdf

