

Why do women choose different medical specialities? The role of taste for competition and specialty amenities

Noémi Berlin, Magali Dumontet

Abstract

Empirical evidence shows that men and women make different educational choices and hold different types of occupations. In this paper, we study the case of medical studies in France: a very competitive field in which there are today more women than men and where high gender imbalances in terms of medical specialty choices are observed. We investigate the determinants of the gender gap of specialty choices that takes place at the end of the 6th year of medical studies after taking a national exam that rank the students allowing them to sequentially choose a specialty from the available residency positions. We confirm that women perform less and thus have a more constrained specialty choice set than men. The taste for competition largely explains this gender gap. We also show that even when facing the same choice set, women choose different specialties than men and that is mainly because women have different taste for specialties amenities.