

What Sets Honors Students Apart? A Ward Attending Perspective



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BACKGROUND

- Nationwide, 20-40% of students receive an honors or top grade designation.
- The characteristics that distinguish a top performance are not well defined.

AIM

To examine teaching ward attendings' opinions of characteristics that define high-performing clerkship students.

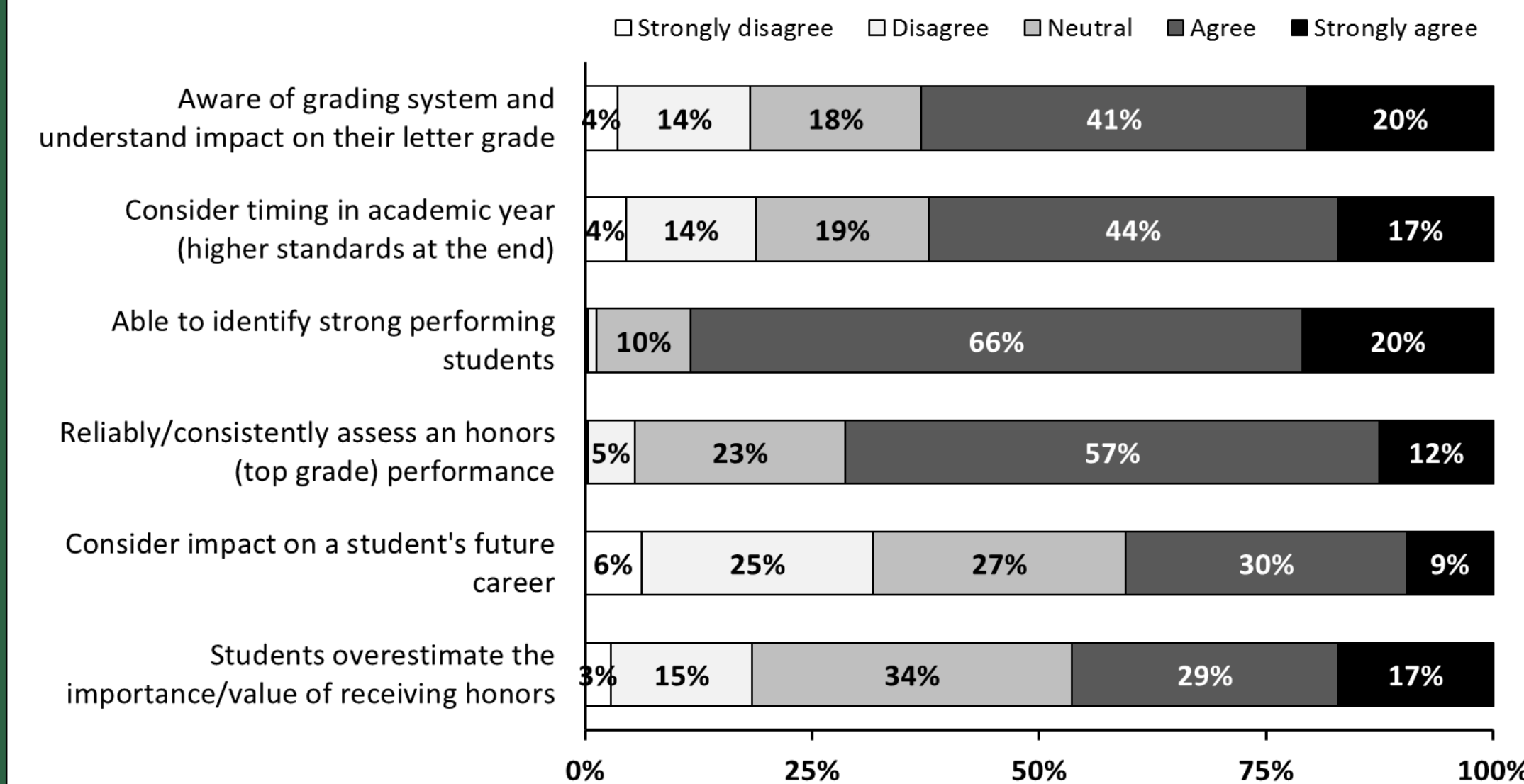
METHODS

- **Design:** cross-sectional survey
- **Setting:** 5 US academic medical centers
- **Participants:** teaching ward attendings in internal medicine and pediatric clerkships (2013-2016).
- **Exclusion:** subspecialty and consults services
- **Measures:** survey instrument with 24 items; Likert scale 1= less emphasis, 10=more emphasis.
- **Analysis:** factor analysis and Cronbach's alpha (>0.9 excellent, >0.8 good).

SURVEY

- Developed from literature review with 3 domains: student characteristics, evaluation experience, and attitudes of the evaluation system
- Characteristics framed by six ACGME core competencies (PC, MK, PBLI, ICS, P, SBP)
- Survey was pilot tested after cognitive interviews
- Response rate: 319 of 516 (62%) of invited faculty completed the survey

Attitudes of Evaluation System



DISCUSSION

- Ownership, clinical reasoning, curiosity, dependability, and high ethical standards were the most important individual characteristics when considering an honors designation
- Factor 1 had the highest mean and contained all five except clinical reasoning
- Factor 1 characteristics may represent those that overlap three critical aspects when determining honors: value to evaluator, observability, and relevance to stage of training.

CONCLUSIONS

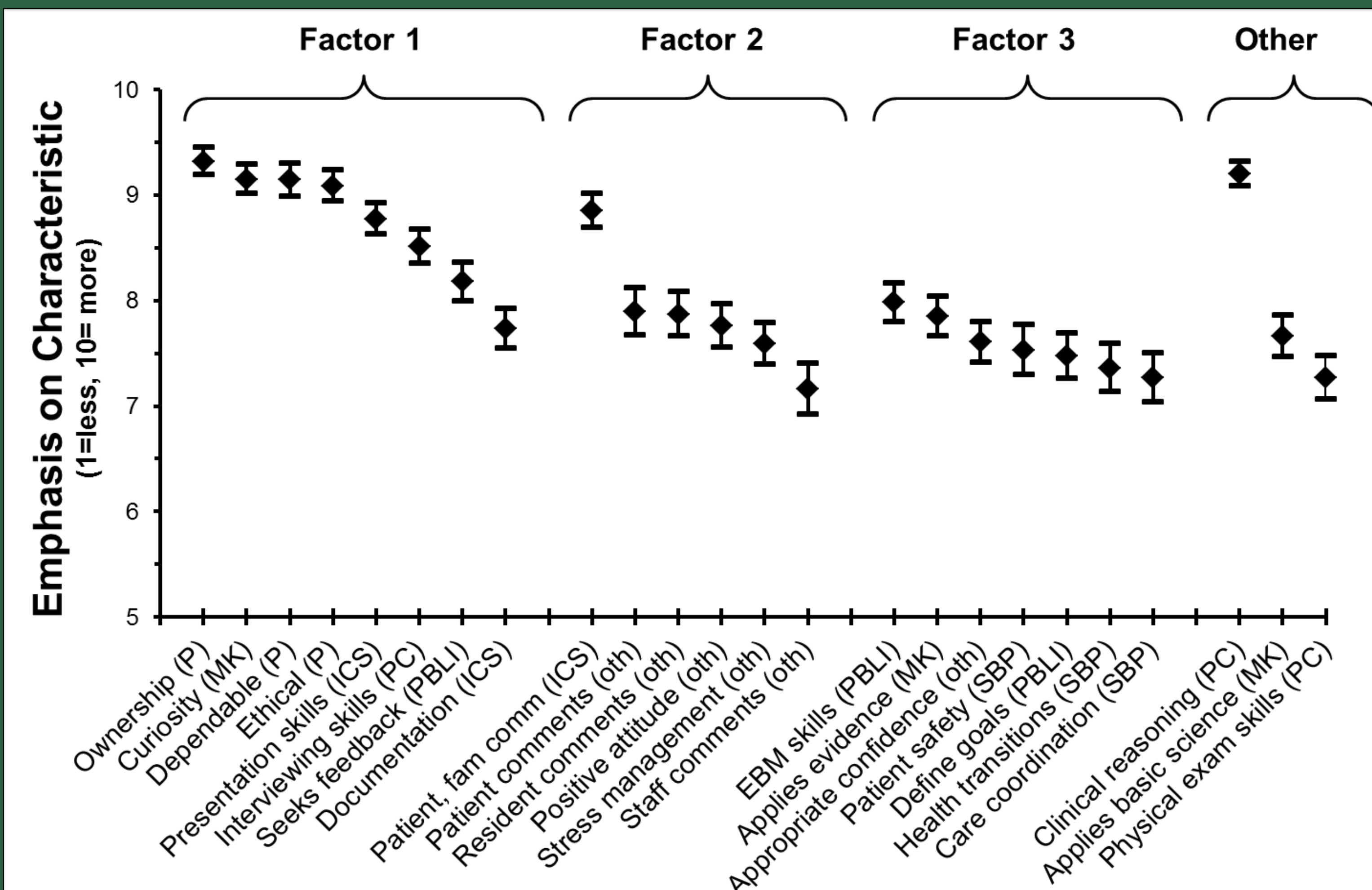
- Despite little training, most faculty felt able to identify and assess an honors performance.
- Components of professionalism, clinical reasoning, and curiosity were among those most valued by teaching attendings.

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PARTICIPANTS (N=319)

Characteristic	N (%)
Specialty	
Internal medicine specialty	99 (31.0%)
General internal medicine	86 (27.0%)
Hospital medicine (adult)	75 (23.5%)
Pediatrics	27 (8.5%)
Medicine-pediatrics	13 (4.1%)
Family medicine	2 (0.6%)
Missing data	17 (5.3%)
Institution	
Institution A (OSU)	96 (30.1%)
Institution B (UAB)	91 (28.5%)
Institution C (Emory)	59 (18.5%)
Institution D (U Kentucky)	34 (10.7%)
Institution E (TJU)	30 (9.4%)
Missing data	9 (2.8%)
Years since graduation	
< 5 years	92 (28.8%)
5-10 years	88 (27.6%)
> 10 years	110 (34.5%)
Missing data	29 (9.1%)



Variable	N (%)
N weeks/ year attending with students	
< 4 weeks/ year	65 (20.4%)
4-8 weeks/ year	108 (33.9%)
>8-16 weeks/year	90 (28.2%)
> 16 weeks/year	33 (10.3%)
Missing data	23 (7.2%)
N 3 rd year students evaluated past year	
< 5 students	82 (25.7%)
5-10 students	128 (40.1%)
> 10 students	43 (13.5%)
Missing data	66 (20.7%)
Received training on the "honors" system	
No	258 (80.9%)
Yes (in the past year)	27 (8.5%)
Yes (in the past 3 years)	18 (5.6%)
Missing data	16 (5.0%)

Variable	N (%)
Percent of students that should get honors	
0-10%	118 (37.0%)
11-25%	147 (46.1%)
>25%	37 (11.6%)
Missing data	17 (5.3%)
How long it takes to identify an "honors student"	
Few days	32 (10.0%)
1 week	101 (31.7%)
2 weeks	143 (44.8%)
3-4 weeks	25 (7.8%)
Missing data	18 (5.6%)