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Retirement Trends and Plans for Practicing Orthopedic Surgeons in Virginia

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## **Introduction**

Knowledge of retirement and practice patterns of orthopedic surgeons are important aspects of caring for, and addressing, the needs of an aging national population. Previous studies reported on work satisfaction and retirement plans of orthopedic surgeons, but are relatively out-of-date for the current practicing physician. Thus, it is difficult to infer accurate workforce predictions in-light of an evolving healthcare system. The purpose of the present study is to characterize demographics, retirement trends, and plans of practicing orthopedic surgeons in Virginia.

## **Methods**

An IRB-exempt survey was administered to active VOS members, age 30 and older, in 2024. All active, full-time practicing orthopedic surgeons were included. Demographic characteristics, practice patterns, work satisfaction and retirement plans were recorded. Descriptive and chi-squared statistical analyses were utilized.

## **Results**

Of the 58 respondents, 49 (87%) identified as male, 7 (12%) as female. A majority of respondents were between age 30-60 (n=40, 68%), worked full-time (n=46, 79%), and worked between 50-70 hrs/wk (n=36, 62%). Most respondents were in an academic practice (n= 35, 60%), with the remainder in private or hospital-employed positions. Each subspecialty was represented. Of the factors contributing to retirement, work/life balance (n=24, 42%) and financial stability (n=20, 35%) were the top reasons. Most orthopedic surgeons planned to retire by age 69, with the most common age range being 65-69 (n=24, 41%).

## **Discussion/Conclusion**

Interval evaluation of retirement trends and plans of orthopedic surgeons in Virginia was undertaken in an effort to assist with making accurate workforce predictions. It is an individualized decision, most commonly influenced by financial stability and a desire for improved work/life balance. Most surgeons plan to retire by age 69, thus workforce planning is necessary to care for the aging population.