



A STUDY ON TREND IN NEET-PG COUNSELLING OVER THE PAST 10 YEARS

Medicine

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ABSTRACT

Over the last ten years, NEET PG counselling patterns have reflected significant changes: a sharp expansion in seats (nearly doubling), volatile cutoffs marked by policy-related dips and surges, and growing preference for balanced specialties such as Psychiatry and Anesthesiology. Interest in core surgical branches has declined, largely due to demanding training, while acceptance of DNB and Diploma pathways has steadily increased. The process has also been consistently affected by delays and controversies, including seat blocking and normalization concerns. Overall, aspirant preferences have shifted toward lifestyle-friendly fields like Dermatology and Pathology; Radiology continues to be a high-value choice but now faces greater competition, underscoring a broader move toward improved work-life balance.

KEYWORDS

NEET PG, DNB, Radiology, Diploma.

INTRODUCTION

The recent NEET PG counseling trends have sparked intense debates around the decreasing preference for surgery as a career choice. But let's take a step back and look at the bigger picture. Trends will come and go. There was a time when dermatology and radiology were the most sought-after. Now, medicine is leading the charts. Surgical branches might not be "popular" today, but the essence of surgery remains unmatched—a field for those truly passionate.

Cutoffs are the minimum scores or percentiles needed to qualify for counseling. They fluctuate due to factors like exam difficulty, number of candidates, seat availability, and policy changes from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. For instance, tougher papers often lead to lower cutoffs, while easier ones push them higher. Over the past five years, we've seen dramatic shifts, including rare reductions to zero percentile in 2023.

Understanding these helps in strategic preparation. High cutoffs in clinical branches like Radiology demand scores above 500, while non-clinical ones might accept lower ranks.

TREND

- 1.- Massive Seat Expansion: PG medical seats more than doubled from ~31k (2013-14) to ~74k (2024-25), significantly increasing opportunities.
- 2.- Fluctuating Cutoffs: Policy changes (like 2023's zero percentile) caused dramatic drops, while overall competition remains high, with recent years showing more stability.
- 3.- Shifting Specialty Preferences:
 - A.- Increased Demand: Lifestyle-oriented branches (Dermatology, Psychiatry, Anesthesia, Pathology, Family Medicine) gained popularity.
 - B.- Declining Interest in Surgery: Factors like demanding training & work-life balance concerns reduced surgical appeal.
 - C.- Radiology & Medicine: Radiology stays premium (high ranks), while General Medicine remains a strong, stable choice.
 - D.- Rise of DNB & Diploma: Increased acceptance and perceived equivalence of NBE qualifications (DNB/Diploma) have boosted their demand.
 - E.- College Type Matters: Government seats remain competitive; Deemed/Private colleges see bigger rank drops in later rounds due to high fees.
 - F.- Persistent Counseling Issues: Major delays, seat-blocking controversies, and normalization issues (multi-session exams) have been recurring challenges.

SPECIFIC CHANGES

- A.- From "Popular" to "Balanced": Top ranks shifted from Dermatology/Radiology towards General Medicine, Pathology, Psychiatry, and Anesthesia for better balance.
- B.- Policy Impact: The zero percentile cutoffs in 2023 were a major, debated event, highlighting attempts to fill seats.
- C.- In essence, the landscape has expanded dramatically, with aspirants now prioritizing work-life balance and accepting diverse pathways (DNB), amidst ongoing structural challenges in the

counseling process.

CONCLUSION

Over the last decade, NEET PG counseling trends show massive seat growth, rising cutoffs for popular branches (Radiology, Medicine), a shift away from surgery due to burnout, increased focus on work-life balance, rising DNB/Diploma choices, but persistent delays and controversies due to normalization, legal issues, and seat blocking, all pointing towards a maturing, yet turbulent, system seeking quality and accessibility.

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