

Most physicians would trade pay for more autonomy

Article



The data: US doctors' average compensation **declined 2.4% in 2022**, according to Doximity's Physician Compensation Report 2023. That's compared with an increase of 3.8% in 2021.

- More than 31,000 physicians answered Doximity surveys between January and December 2022.

Behind the numbers: Doximity didn't specify a figure for 2022's average salary—although it did give averages for some specialties.

- **Surgeons make the highest salaries.** Neurosurgeons averaged \$788,313 in 2022. Thoracic, orthopedic, plastic, and vascular surgeons were not far behind.
- **Pediatricians make the lowest salaries.** A pediatric endocrinologist averaged just \$218,266 in 2022. Pediatricians specializing in infectious diseases, rheumatology, oncology, and nephrology all averaged less than \$240,000.
- For context, the **median US salary was \$54,132** in 2022, per the US Bureau of Labor Statistics.

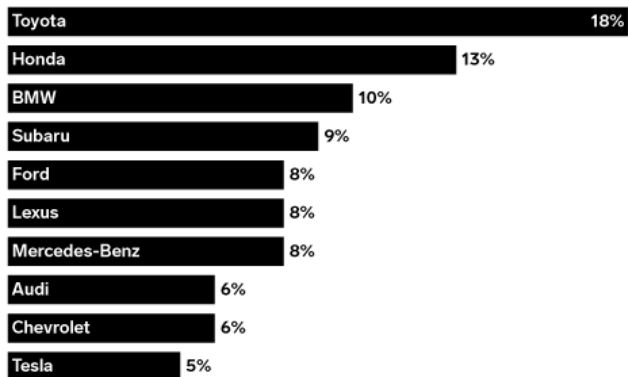
But doctors work hard for those big pay packages:

- **Most spend 11 to 15 years in training:** Four years in an undergraduate program, four more in medical school, then three to seven years in a residency program to learn a specialty.
- The average medical school graduate carries **\$250,990 in student loan debt.**
- **Less than half (48%) of physicians say they are very or somewhat happy at work,** compared with 75% who said the same in 2021, per Medscape's [Physician Lifestyle and Happiness Report](#) 2023.
- **More than half (53%) of physicians say they are burned out,** and 23% report being **depressed,** per Medscape's [Physician Burnout and Depression Report](#) 2023. Those figures are up from 42% and 15%, respectively, in 2018.
- **71% would take or have taken lower compensation** in exchange for more autonomy or a better work-life balance, per Doximity.

Our take: Doctors are people too. They deal with family and financial obligations in the same inflationary environment as the rest of us. It would surprise some observers that **Toyota, Honda, and BMW are the top three car brands among US physicians**—and they have been (in that order) for the past six years, per Medscape.

Cars That US Physicians Drive, by Brand, Oct 2022

% of respondents



Note: only top 10 are shown

Source: Medscape, "Physician Lifestyle & Happiness Report 2023," Jan 20, 2023

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