

Editorial

Oral surgery: a rise that's no accident

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“Oral surgery is mouthwatering”. While this headline, borrowed from the What's Up Doc editorial team in their 17 December 2025 analysis, is intended to be humorous, the observation it illustrates is entirely serious [1]. The results of the 2025–2026 medical residency entrance exam marked a historic turning point: oral surgery is no longer a niche discipline; it has become a leading specialty.

In a French medical landscape traditionally dominated by anesthesiology and intensive care, ophthalmology, and plastic surgery, oral surgery has shaken up the hierarchy. By climbing to 13th place, thanks to a meteoric rise of 15 positions, it sends a clear message: it is no longer a fallback option but a chosen vocation.

This “young” specialty celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2025, having graduated 294 oral surgeons since 2015 (132 from a medical background and 162 from a dental background).

This newfound appeal stems first and foremost from the demanding nature of its curriculum.

Leading to a Specialized Studies Diploma (DES) common to both medicine and dentistry, this hybrid training program requires dual clinical expertise, at the intersection of medical and dental knowledge. The limited number of positions available in the medical field (only about ten for the 2025–2026 academic year) acts as a catalyst: scarcity creates value. This “gold standard” now attracts ambitious residents seeking excellence. Meanwhile, the dental sector offered 26 positions this year, which is a stable figure.

But beyond the rankings, it is the specialty's intrinsic transformation that is so captivating. Far from the reductive image of wisdom tooth extraction, modern oral surgery is a hub

of innovation. It caters to the aspirations of a generation of “digital native” physicians who view robotic-assisted surgery, 3D printing, and augmented reality as the perfect medium for self-expression. This discipline combines manual dexterity with cutting-edge technology at the service of precision surgery.

This growth also reflects increasing societal and professional awareness. As experts in outpatient surgery, tissue reconstruction, and pain management, this specialty is perfectly aligned with the current needs of the medical workforce, providing practical solutions where the healthcare network is weak. Furthermore, its increasing scientific visibility, boosted by high-level conferences, further solidifies its legitimacy.

For medical students who still undecided, the message is clear: oral surgery now offers a rare combination of technical challenges, quality of life, and the opportunity to have a real impact on public health.

To policymakers, this enthusiasm creates responsibilities. It is crucial to invest heavily in this field before the demand for care exceeds training and treatment capacities.

The years 2025–2026 mark the birth of a new era for oral surgery in France. It has reached the top; it is now up to us to maintain its position and build the future.

I hope 2026 brings you all happiness and success, both in your personal and professional lives.

Reference

1. Classement général des spécialités 2025 : on ne sort pas des sentiers battus. What's Up Doc. Available from: <https://www.whatsupdoc-lemag.fr/article/classement-general-des-specialites-2025-ne-sort-pas-des-sentiers-battus>.

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