An Increase in the Number of Residency Applications In the First Residency Match During a Pandemic – A Survey of Single Institution Medical Students

Faisal Aziz, Marvin Chau, Ahsan Zil E Ali, Glenn Slick, Justin Brooke
Penn State University College of Medicine

Background

- The pandemic urged the switch to Web-based interviews during the 2020-2021 application Cycle.
- The study wanted to investigate the barriers and advantages perceived by the interviewees.

Purpose

- The aim is for institutions to implement future directives addressing the barriers students observe with the new interviewing process.

Methods

Design
- Online Survey Study exploring factors associated with applying to more residency programs.
- Electronic surveys were sent to 152 students of whom 44 completed the questionnaire.

Population
- 4th year medical students at Penn State College of Medicine.

Recruitment
- Email graduating students institution list

Measurements
- Univariate Analysis
- 22 questions
  - 3 Basic Demographics
  - 14 Factors associated with applying to programs
  - 5 Importance of in-person interview

Population
- Importance of in-person interview

Results

Importance of in-person Interview

| Factors          | Preference
<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-Person</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Factors to be significantly (all p<0.05), associated with applying to more residency programs:
- preference of residency interview formats
- importance of in-person faculty interviews
- visitation of site location on rankings

Further univariate analysis showed:
- COVID-19 affected those who have not decided on a career path (p<0.05)
- However, most students cited it has not affected their choice (79.87%)

Opinion of Web-Based Interviews

| Opinion                  | Preference
<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* Tougher Interview Style</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Unable to Present Yourself</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Easier to Communicate</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Will Be Able to Connect with Interviewer</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversation (résumé Orginally)</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Visiting Residency Site Location Influences Ranking

| Site Location Influence | Preference
<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Large</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Small</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion/Conclusions

- Potential barriers can be fundamentally grounded in the inter-personal interactions among interviewer and interviewee. COVID-19 affected and further worsened the conditions for those who had their career path undecided. Perception about web-based formats cites a majority of students sees a financial benefit with a loss of interpersonal communication and interaction.

Limitations

- Insufficient number of participants
- It is not known if the findings are generalizable to all applying students
- The questions may not address all barriers
- Inability for clarification from respondents

References