Perceptions of the Podiatric Surgical Residency Interview Process

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**Statement of Purpose and Literature Review**

The podiatric surgical residency interview process might represent a challenging and perhaps stressful time for both student applicants and residency programs. For the students, they have to simultaneously prepare for academic interviews, social interviews, the APMLE Part II examination, and actively participate in the externship process.

For residency programs, a great deal of organization and preparation is required in order to effectively evaluate, analyze and select applicants into a ranked list.

There have been several studies in the literature that have discussed the medical residency interview process, as well as different ways to improve this for both general medical students and residency programs [1-3]. However, there are relatively few publications that have specifically examined the podiatric residency interview process [4-6]. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to evaluate and better understand a fourth year podiatric medical students’ perception of the application process for preparation for, and experience with the CRIP interview process.

**Methodology**

An electronic survey was developed and distributed to eligible students from the Temple University School of Podiatric Medicine’s (TUSPM) Class of 2018. Participation was voluntary and responses were recorded anonymously. Inclusion criteria for the study were students from the TUSPM Class of 2018 who successfully completed the APMLE Part I and II examinations, participated in CRIP, and matriculated in May 2018. Exclusion criteria were students who did not successfully complete the APMLE Part I or II and/or those who did not graduate.

Based on these criteria, 81 students were eligible for inclusion and invited to participate. The questionnaire consisted of 36 questions (29 multiple choice, 1 multiple/multiple choice, 6 open-response). Descriptive statistics of responses were tabulated and reported herein.

**Results**

Forty-seven students volunteered to participate for a study response rate of 58.0% (47/81). Representative results are displayed in the accompanying figures and tables.

With respect to structural aspects of the residency interview, 46.8% of students reported that they applied to a range of 5-10 programs, with 19.1% of students reporting that most of their interviews were between 15-30 minutes in duration. 74.5% felt that this was an adequate length of time to be gauged as an applicant.

With respect to perception of preparation for the residency interview, 57.4% of students felt that they were adequately prepared. Out of several main subject areas that we have found to frequently be a part of the interview, 34% of students each reported feeling most prepared for both diabetic foot infections and podiatric traumatology. Conversely, 42.6% of students felt that they were least prepared for bio-mechanics. 53.2% of students felt that a combination of rapid fire questions and case work-ups was the interview style that provided the best indication of their knowledge. 83% of students reported that their interviews were a mix of academic and social questions.

About half of students (48.9%) reported feeling confident that they would match with at least one program by the end of interviews, although 31.9% of students reported feeling “misled” by at least one program at some point during the process. Only about half of students (51.1%) reported that specific residency websites and the CASPR pages represented an accurate representation of program information.

A small majority of students (59.6%) reported being “satisfied” with the process, although a higher percentage (74.5%) reported that it was what they expected. And although most students (66%) reported that a centralized location such as Frisco, TX represented an “ideal” localization for interviews to take place, 74.5% reported that this presented a personal financial strain on them.

Students reported that the top three program attributes that they looked for when considering their rankings were 1) the quantity and diversity of the surgical case load, 2) the culture of the residency program and its reputation, and 3) the quantity and diversity of the faculty. They also felt that the most important attributes that programs look for in students were 1) work ethic, 2) ability to work well with others, and 3) personality and academic knowledge. 72.3% of students felt that their performance during the externship process was their greatest asset during the process.

**Discussion**

Limitations of this study are certainly that it represents a relatively small cross-sectional analysis with a survey design, but might provide some interesting trends for future work on this subject. In conclusion, the results of this investigation provide some introductory data on podiatric medical student perception of the residency interview process, and might provide some interesting avenues for further investigations to enhance the process for both students and residency programs.

**Methods**

All survey questions were generated using Qualtrics software. Descriptive data was analyzed using SPSS software, version 21. Results were displayed visually in a bar chart format.

**References**


