Senior Medical Student Opinions Regarding the Ideal Urology Interview Day

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INTRODUCTION: Applicant interviews for urology residency positions are a stressful and costly process for students, faculty, and staff. We conducted a prospective survey to better determine what urology applicants perceive as an ideal interview process to gain sufficient knowledge about a training program.

METHODS: A questionnaire was anonymously completed by all urology residency applicants interviewing at the Medical College of Wisconsin from 2007 to 2013. Questionnaire subject headings included "ideal interview format," "factors contributing to understanding the residency program," and "factors contributing to final rank list order."

RESULTS: Questionnaires were distributed to and completed by 221 senior medical students applying for a urology residency position. Most respondents (>80%) reported they would prefer to partake in 5 to 7 faculty interviews in an office setting with the total interview process spanning half to three-fourths of the workday. Spending time with current residents was considered the most valuable tool to acquire knowledge about a residency program. The most important criteria when ranking a program were resident satisfaction, resident operative experience, and perceived strength of faculty.

CONCLUSIONS: Academic urology programs may wish to consider applicant ideals when organizing residency interviews. Interaction with current residents appears to be the most valuable resource allowing applicants to garner knowledge about a urology training program. (J Surg 71:878-882. © 2014 Association of Program Directors in Surgery. Published by Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.)

KEY WORDS: residency, interview, ideal

COMPETENCIES: Professionalism, Interpersonal and Communication Skills

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INTRODUCTION

Although value likely exists in allowing residency applicants to explore the wide variety and structure of various training programs, the process can be labor intensive and financially taxing for both the student and the residency program. In 2006, urology applicants spent an average of \$4000 attending a median of 12 interviews during the application cycle. Furthermore, training programs spend thousands of dollars coordinating interview days and lose tens of thousands of dollars in potential revenue due to lost clinical time of faculty members. Therefore, much is at stake regarding the application process. To date, few published studies have examined what applicants look for during the interview process to gain information about a residency program.^{2,3} The purpose of this study was to conduct a survey of senior medical students applying for a house staff position in urologic surgery to determine what applicants deem as important components of the interview process to accumulate necessary information about a particular training program.

METHODS

A written survey was completed by all applicants who interviewed for a urology residency position at our institution between 2007 and 2013. At the beginning of the interview day, applicants completed a departmentmade questionnaire that consisted of 4 multiple-choice, 4 yes/no, and 14 linear analog scale questions about an applicant's ideal interview day (Fig. 1). The questionnaire was based on surveys uses in previously published studies of residency interviews. ^{2,3} Question topics included "ideal interview format," "factors contributing to understanding the residency program," and "factors contributing to final rank list order." The format of our urologic surgery residency interview day consisted of dinner with current residents the evening before the formal interview day, welcome/introductory session, tour of the city, tour of the hospital/clinics, lunch with current residents, and formal

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FIGURE 1. Ideal urology interview questionnaire.

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