

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

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.¹ 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 department-made 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 used 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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1. During the interview day what percentage of the faculty members would you like to interview with?
 - A. 100%
 - B. 75%
 - C. 50%
 - D. 25%
 - E. One (just the Chairman)
2. In your opinion, what is an appropriate number of faculty interviews?
 - A. >10
 - B. 8 - 10
 - C. 5 - 7
 - D. 2 - 4
 - E. 1 (just the Chairman)
3. Would being interviewed by two faculty members at the same time be intimidating?
 - A. Yes
 - B. No
4. How long should the interview day last?
 - A. ½ of the day
 - B. ¾ of the day
 - C. 1 day
 - D. More than 1 day
5. In what forum do you prefer to meet with faculty members?
 - A. Office interview
 - B. Meeting with faculty during OR cases
 - C. Meeting with faculty informally between OR cases/clinic patients

On a scale of 1 to 10, please answer the following questions with regards to your understanding of the urology residency program:

6. How valuable is the initial welcome/information session?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Little importance				Very important					
7. How valuable is a tour of the hospital and clinics?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Little importance				Very important					
8. How valuable is a tour of the city and surrounding area?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Little importance				Very important					
9. How valuable is time with the residents during the interview day?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Little importance				Very important					

10. I would have liked ...:

More interview dates to choose from.	Y _____	N _____
A program sponsored dinner the night before the interview.	Y _____	N _____
Spending time in OR/Clinic with faculty.	Y _____	N _____

On a scale of 1 to 10, please answer the following questions with regards to your rank order of urology residency programs:

11. Location

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Little importance				Very important					
12. Reputation

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Little importance				Very important					
13. Residency duration

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Little importance				Very important					
14. Faculty

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Little importance				Very important					
15. VA Hospital

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Little importance				Very important					
16. Children's Hospital

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Little importance				Very important					
17. Research Time

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Little importance				Very important					
18. Resident OR Experience

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Little importance				Very important					
19. Resident Satisfaction

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Little importance				Very important					
20. Interview Day Experience

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Little importance				Very important					

FIGURE 1. Ideal urology interview questionnaire.

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