



The 2017 Integrated IR Residency Match: Results of a National Survey of Applicants and Program Directors

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: To characterize and compare the experiences of matched applicants and program directors (PDs) participating in the first large-scale integrated interventional radiology (IR) residency match.

Materials and Methods: Survey questionnaires were distributed nationally to integrated IR applicants who matched in the 2017 Match cycle and PDs. Both groups were questioned regarding their experiences with the application, interview, rank, and match processes as well as applicant-specific and PD-specific information. Summary and descriptive statistics were applied to responses, and comparison of Likert scale responses was performed by two-sample *t* test.

Results: Sixty-one matched applicants (51.3%) and 34 PDs (55.7%) responded to the survey. Regarding the match process, applicants believed United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) Step 1 score ($P = .002$) and connection to a program's geographic location ($P = .006$) were significantly more important than PDs did, whereas PDs ranked grades ($P = .049$), class rank ($P = .011$), academic awards ($P = .003$), additional degrees ($P < .001$), and USMLE Step 2 Clinical Skills score ($P < .001$) as significantly more important factors than applicants did. Additional information regarding demographic data, medical school experiences in IR, application strategies, interview experiences, rank lists, the intern year, and match results are reported.

Conclusions: The completion of the first large-scale integrated IR match represents a paradigm shift in the way in which IR practitioners are recruited and trained. This study provides valuable benchmark data and analysis that can be used to improve efforts to match the best-fitting applicants into the integrated IR residency and improve future match cycles for applicants and PDs alike.

ABBREVIATIONS

CK = Clinical Knowledge, DR = diagnostic radiology, ESIR = Early Specialization in Interventional Radiology, NRMP = National Resident Matching Program, PD = program director, USMLE = United States Medical Licensing Examination

The integrated interventional radiology (IR) residency matched 119 applicants to positions at 61 institutions across the United States in the 2017 Match, marking the first time the residency has participated in the Match on a large scale (1). The residency received a substantial amount of interest, with more than 600 students applying to the available

positions (2). The competitive application and selection process was a new experience for all parties involved, resulting in many questions and uncertainties voiced by medical students, program directors (PDs), and others (3,4). Currently, there are limited publicly available data regarding the quality of integrated IR applicants and their experiences

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in applying to, interviewing for, and ranking residency programs. Similarly, there is little information regarding PDs' experiences with implementing a program and participating in the match process. The present study sought to address the lack of information regarding applicants' and PDs' experiences throughout the 2017 Match process by surveying these two groups.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Institutional review board approval was obtained for this anonymous survey study. Separate applicant and PD surveys were created consisting of multiple-choice, seven-point Likert scale, and free-response questions. The majority of survey questions were unique to the survey population (applicant vs PD); however, some question overlap existed to allow for direct comparison of results between the two groups. The applicant survey consisted of 63 questions, and the PD survey consisted of 68 questions. Both groups were surveyed regarding demographic data; medical school experiences in IR; the application, interview, and rank process; intern year; and match results. Additionally, applicants were asked about academic achievements, whereas PDs provided information regarding their residency program. Surveys were reviewed by the National Resident Matching Program (NRMP) to ensure they were in accordance with the NRMP Match Participation Agreement. Study data were collected and managed by using REDCap electronic data capture tools hosted at the study institution (5).

Surveys were distributed via an email message containing the anonymous survey link after match results were released on March 17, 2017, and remained open for 3 weeks. The email contained the survey's purpose, privacy policy, investigator details, and a survey hyperlink. Participants were instructed to take the survey only once. PD surveys were distributed directly to PDs at all 61 institutions participating in the 2017 Match by using publically available information. Two parallel methods were used to distribute applicant surveys. First, program coordinators at all institutions participating in the Match were asked to forward the survey email to their matched applicants. To account for programs that did not forward this message, matched applicants were also able to voluntarily indicate their interest in study participation online (via Society of Interventional Radiology [SIR] Connect, AuntMinnie.com, and studentdoctornetwork.com). If interested, their status as a matched applicant was confirmed by the study team before participation.

Summary statistics were used to describe categorical variables. Descriptive statistics were used to describe continuous variables. Comparison of Likert scale responses was performed by using two-sample *t* tests. A *P* value of less than .05 was considered statistically significant. Statistical analyses were performed by using STATA software (version 5.0; StataCorp, College Station, Texas) and Excel 2010 (Microsoft, Redmond, Washington).

Table 1. Matched Applicant and PD Demographic Characteristics

Characteristic	Applicants	PDs
Age (y)		
Mean ± SD	27.2 ± 2.3	47.9 ± 8.4
Range	23–35	35–63
Sex		
Male	45 (73.8)	31 (91.2)
Female	16 (26.2)	3 (8.8)
Medical school/residency program region		
Northeast	19 (31.3)	11 (32.4)
Southeast	20 (32.8)	8 (23.5)
Midwest	11 (18.0)	8 (23.5)
Southwest	7 (11.5)	2 (5.9)
West	3 (4.9)	5 (14.7)
International	1 (1.6)	–
Current level of training		
Fourth-year medical student	60 (98.4)	–
Other	1 (1.6)	–
Program type		
University-based	–	27 (79.4)
University-associated	–	6 (17.6)
Community	–	1 (2.9)
Type of graduate		
Doctor of Medicine (MD)	53 (86.9)	–
Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO)	7 (11.5)	–
International Medical Graduate (IMG)	1 (1.6)	–
Faculty position of PD (if university-based or -associated)		
Professor	–	3 (8.8)
Associate professor	–	15 (44.1)
Assistant professor	–	14 (41.2)
Instructor	–	1 (2.9)
Other advanced degrees		
None	46 (75.4)	–
Master's degree (MS or MA)	8 (13.1)	–
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)	2 (3.3)	–
Other (MPA, JD, MBA)	4 (8.2)	–

Note—Values in parentheses are percentages.
PD = program director; SD = standard deviation.

RESULTS

Survey Response and Demographics

Sixty-one of 119 applicants who matched to integrated IR residencies in the 2017 Match responded, representing a 51.3% survey response rate. Thirty-four responses were received among the 61 PDs, representing a 55.7% response rate. Applicant and PD demographic data are provided in [Table 1](#).

Medical School Experiences in IR

Applicants were questioned regarding when they first developed an interest in IR and chose to pursue a career

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