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Authors

Finan, M
Jeanmonod, R

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1 Backstage at the Emergency Medicine Match

Finan M, Jeanmonod R/St. Luke's University Hospital, Bethlehem, PA

Objectives: There is little data on which criteria are used by EM program directors (PDs) when selecting candidates for interview or when ranking candidate's. We investigate which parts of the candidate's application are most important to secure an interview and a spot on the rank list.

Methods: This is a cross-sectional study of PDs in ACGME approved EM programs in 2012-2013. Our study looked at 14 criteria from the candidate application. PDs ranked all 14 criteria in order of importance when inviting candidates for interviews. They then ranked the same criteria in formulating their rank list. The study was IRB exempt.

Results: 51 PDs returned surveys, with all areas of the country represented (New England, Mid-Atlantic, East North Central, West North Central, South Atlantic, East South Central, West South Central, Mountain, Pacific). For the purposes of interview invitation, 40 programs ranked "letters of recommendation (LORs)," 31 ranked "emergency medicine rotation grade," and 19 ranked "USMLE step 2 score" as one of the three top factors. "Candidate participating in couple's match," "citizenship status," and "contribution to gender/racial diversity" were ranked as the three least important factors in extending interviews to candidates by 37, 26, and 24 programs respectively.

In formulating the rank order list, 44 programs chose "interview performance," 32 chose "LORs," and 26 selected "emergency medicine rotation grade" as one of the top three criteria. "Candidate participating in couple's match," "contribution to diversity," "extracurricular activities" and "presence of research publications" were ranked as the three least important criteria (with 29, 25, 23, and 23 PDs choosing these, respectively).

Conclusions: PDs consistently placed a high value on LORs and EM rotation grades when choosing interviewees. Once selected to interview, the most important factor in determining location on the final rank list is interview performance.