The Urology Match and Post-Interview Communication

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INTRODUCTION

- The American Urological Association (AUA) Urology Residency Matching Program tightly regulates communication between applicants and urology residency programs following an applicant's interview. Residency programs are prohibited from certain post-interview communication in order to protect urology applicants.
- The purpose of this study was to understand the frequency and nature of post-interview communication as it relates to the rules and regulations of the AUA match, as well as the impact of such communication on the outcomes of the match.

METHODS

- An anonymous, 20-question electronic survey questionnaire was sent to all applicants (n=231) to a single urology residency training program during the 2017 AUA match cycle.
- The survey was administered one month after the release of match results and queried applicants regarding their experiences with post-interview communication.
- Statistical analyses were performed using Microsoft Excel and SPSS. Statistical analyses included the Chi-squared test for categorical data, as well as Fisher's exact test.

RESULTS

Table 1. Applicant survey questions

1.	What racial/ethnic population do you best identify with? [American Indian or Alaska Native/Asian/African American/Caucasian/Hispanic or Latino/Native Hawaiian/Other]
2.	How many programs did you apply to?
3.	How many "away" rotations (or visiting student elective rotations) did you complete?
4.	Did you receive any communication from any residency programs before the Urology Residency Match? [Yes/no]
5.	How many programs did you receive post- interview communication from?
6.	If you did receive communication from any residency program, in what form(s) was the communication? Select all applicable [Phone call/Letter/Email/Not applicable]
7.	If you did receive communication from any residency program, from who was the communication? Select all applicable. [Resident/Chief or Chair/Program Director/Staff/Not applicable]
8.	Did any programs request you to reveal where you would be ranking their program on your Urology Residency Match rank list? [Yes/No]
9.	Did you ever exaggerate your interest in a program either during an interview or through communication after the interview? [Yes/no]
10.	Did any programs promise to rank you at the top of their list if you ranked them at the top of your list? [Yes/no]
11.	Did the post interview communication cause you to rank that program higher than you initially planned or keep the program ranked #1 if they were already ranked there? [Yes/no/not applicable]
12.	Did the post interview communication cause you to change the ranking of the program you eventually matched at? [Yes/no/not applicable]
13.	Did you match at a program that contacted you? [Yes/no/not applicable]
14.	Did any programs contact you to strongly encourage you and/or pressure you into returning for a second look visit? [Yes/no]
15.	How many second looks did you do?
16.	If you went to any second looks, how many were paid by the program? This includes any payment for transportation or accommodation.
17.	Please enter a numeric estimate of how much you spent on total interview costs, including application fees, transportation, and boarding costs.
18.	Please enter a numeric estimate of how much you spent on going to second look visits to various programs, including transportation and boarding costs.
19.	Were you ever asked a question during your interview that was inappropriate according to match rules including questions about your religion, marital status, sexual orientation, or pregnancy status? [Yes/no]
20.	Did you ever experience anything during the interview or post-interview process that you felt was unfair or unprofessional? If so, please describe below without listing program identifiers.

Table 2. Odds of matching by method of communication

Method of contact	Number of contacts*	Odds Ratio	(95% CI)	P value
Email	46 (68%)	Ref.		
Phone call	7 (10%)	20.0	2.12-188.66	0.003
Letter	15 (22%)	1.05	0.28-3.90	0.598

A total of 47 applicants received post-interview communication. Several applicants were contacted numerous times, for a total of 68 contacts between applicants and residency programs.

Table 3. Self-reported communication violations

Rule violated	Number of violations
American Urologic Association Match Guidelines*	
No offers or commitments to "rank an applicant first on my list" will be made to applicants before the match	8
No verbal contact with applicants will be made by anyone from a program after the interviews	46
Title VII Discrimination Practice†	
National Origin Discrimination	1
Sex Discrimination (including pregnancy based discrimination)	7

*https://www.auanet.org/education/educational-programs/residents/residency/urology-and-specialty-matches#guidelines
†https://www.eeoc.gov/facts/qanda.html

Table 4. Applicant survey responses highlighting unprofessional interview or post-interview behavior

They were "encouraging me to send a letter of intent, with subtle implication of being ranked higher if you did."
"Asked to name my top 3 programs on the spot, asked all of my stats about # of interview offers, how many accepted, and how many I was going on (and was not allowed to navigate away from the question), asked to name all of my previous interviews, asked to name my least favorite interview and why."
"One interviewer demanded I say which program was at the top of my list during an interview. Multiple interviews at multiple different programs asked how many interviews I was going on and at which programs."
I was "asked questions about whether the rival program at my school was better/ why should I attend the current program. [It was] very awkward and inappropriate."
"I was asked at almost every interview if I was planning on having kids in the near future."
"Asking me to specifically say if I wanted to stay or leave my home program."
"It was uncomfortable when a program stated, 'let us know if we will be on the top of your list'."
I was "asked about marital status, asked to rank other programs, etc."
I was "pressured to go to second look to fear that I wouldn't not be ranked"
There were "racist comments, [I was] asked about marital status, if I wanted kids, which programs I interviewed at, and which programs I liked."
"One program made me tell them how many programs I applied to, how many interviews offers I got, and then list off every program I interviewed at. Then they asked me my relationship status. "
"I had one interview that was almost entirely 'banned' questions. How many interviews have I had, do I plan on having kids soon, etc."
"I was asked if I was an 'illegal immigrant'"
I was asked "about where I've interviewed, total interviews, where I'd rank #1."
"Several programs asked about my future plans for children."
I was asked "where I was ranking programs, I previously interviewed, if I had children or was planning to during residency, if I had an SO [significant other]."
"One resident used the n word during pre-interview dinner."

RESULTS

- 78/231 surveys were completed (34% response rate). Respondents applied to a mean of 78 residency programs and attended a mean of 2 away rotations. 23 respondents (29%) participated in a second look visit
- 47 respondents (60%) reported receiving post-interview communication, in the form of emails, letters, or phone calls.
- The odds of matching to a given residency program based on the type of communication are presented in Table 2. Rules violations that resulted from these communications are displayed in Table 3.
- 20 respondents (26%) were asked to reveal where they would be ranking a program on their rank list, and 15 (19%) reported that post-interview communication caused them to rank a program higher than initially planned (or keep at #1).
- 8 applicants (10%) reported that programs promised to rank them at the top of their list if the applicant would reciprocally rank the program at the top of his/her list.
- 16 (21%) reported that they were "strongly encouraged and/or pressured" into returning for a second look visit. The average estimated cost of a second look visit combined was $253

CONCLUSIONS

- Post-interview communication between applicants and urology residency programs is prevalent, with numerous violations of the rules of the match. Prohibited communication may impact the rank lists of urology applicants. Consideration should be given to prohibiting all forms of post-interview communication.