Surveying Family Medicine Residency Applicants to Improve Virtual Interviewing

Laura Zhang, MD
PGY 3 Resident, McGaw Family Medicine at Lake Forest

Abstract:

We attempted to evaluate the experiences of interviewees for Northwestern's family medicine residency programs at both Lake Forest and Humboldt Park to investigate how our interview format (specifically our novel virtual platform amidst the Coronavirus pandemic) influences our applicants' overall interview experience for the 2020-2021 application cycle. We achieved this by distributing via email an anonymous, multiple-choice survey to all applicants who had completed an interview at either of the aforementioned programs. Highlights of our results include that candidates greatly prefer interviewing with both the program director and with a current resident, while less so with the department chair. Furthermore, most respondents considered a total of four interviews built into the interview day as ideal. Although many respondents indicated that they experienced a reduced cost burden due to virtual interviewing, a slight majority indicated that they would prefer in-person interviews if given a choice. Finally, most candidates prefer Zoom as the video conference platform, compared to Microsoft Teams and "Other". We realize we will likely need to adapt our survey questions in the future when we revert to in-person interviews; however, our results were nonetheless helpful in guiding us to adapt our interviewing process to improve the overall experience for interview candidates for future application cycles.