

Anesthesiology Residency Applicant Perspective With Respect to Interviewing on a Weekend vs. a Weekday

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Learner Audience: The Residency Program Director, Associate Program Director/s, Residency Coordinator and Department Chairperson are typically integrally involved in residency recruitment efforts on an annual basis. All have a substantial stake in the recruitment effort at the institution's residency training program.

Background: Most previous studies served to guide program directors in selecting residents, such as the study by Easdown, et al (1) but few have focused on the medical student perspective with respect to the interview process.

In an anonymous, web-based survey, Deiorio, et al identified resident satisfaction and faculty-resident relationships as the most important characteristics to emergency medicine medical student applicants in selecting a program. The authors argued that these two residency qualities were potentially controllable by program directors in terms of exposure during the interview day (2).

In another electronic survey, plastic surgery residency applicants' preferences were examined regarding the interview process and features of accepted applicants (e.g. AOA status, USMLE scores, etc.) Geographic location was found to be an important consideration for applicants when applying to and ranking programs. Applicants desired interviews on weekdays and attempted to coordinate interviews by regional geography (3).

1. LJ Easdown, PL Castro, EP Shinkle, L Small, J Algren. The behavioral interview, a method to evaluate ACGME competencies in resident selection: a pilot project. JEPM, Vol.7 No.1, Jan-June, 2005.

2. Deiorio NM, LM Yarris, and SA Gaines. "Emergency medicine residency applicant views on the interview day process." Acad Emerg Med. 2009 Dec;16 Suppl 2:S67-70.

3. CR Rogers et al. "Integrated plastic surgery residency applicant survey: characteristics of successful applicants and feedback about the interview process." Plast Reconstr Surg. 2009 May;123(5):1607-17.

Needs Assessment: Medical students have typically had to interview for residency on weekdays. Our program previously only offered weekday interviews. We anecdotally noted that weekday interviews were often quite challenging for students to schedule while attempting to complete fourth-year medical school obligations. Further, students were often forced to cancel interviews at institutions that they maintained serious interest in due to scheduling conflicts with other interview offers. These conflicts often arise because all 129 training programs are trying to fit interviews into a weekday schedule over approximately 10 weeks. Expanding to include weekend interviews would increase days available to interview by roughly 20 days.

Hypothesis: A weekend interview day option will be well received by medical students.

Curriculum Design: Following IRB exemption, a survey was sent out to those who interviewed for 2009 residency spots following the match day. The Interviewees reviewed an information sheet detailing the optional, anonymous nature of their participation and then responded to 18 questions regarding interviewing on a weekday vs. a weekend. Responses were given on a 5-point, Likert scale score of "very negative," "negative," "neutral," "positive," and "very positive."

Outcome: Out of 130 survey invitations, 67 individuals started and completed the survey. Of these 67 people, 61% had a weekend interview day. Ninety-four percent felt the weekend interview day was worthwhile and/or beneficial. Sixty percent of applicants felt positively about the timing or flow of the weekend interview day and 85% felt positively about the scheduling ramifications of a weekend interview. Potential drawbacks of the weekend

Curriculum 14

interview day: 28% felt the weekend option had a negative impact on exposure to faculty and residents and 46% felt it had a negative impact on exposure to a typical workday.

Future recruitment improvement efforts must consider pre-interview dinners and perhaps encouraging second looks for weekend interview efforts to be successful. The feasibility of weekend interview days depends on faculty availability and consequently may have additional costs.