Web-based Residency Training Program Reviews Influence Applicants Who Use Them
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For most applicants, the residency program selection process comprises many difficult personal and professional decisions. Residency programs have used paper and Internet-based evaluation systems, but these systems are designed primarily for internal assessment purposes and the results are often not made available to applicants.

Scutwork (http://www.scutwork.com) allows medical students and house officers to submit reviews of their respective training programs and permits registered users to view these editorials. All reviews displayed are filtered and structured based on predefined criteria.

Since its deployment on January 1, 2000, we have collected over 5000 program reviews and currently average nearly half a million page views per month. While it is clear that Scutwork has gained increasing popularity since its inception, we implemented an online survey to investigate further how Scutwork has influenced the residency selection process.

In this report, we look specifically at how this system influenced current residents in their program selection process.

METHOD

Our sample population consists of registered users of Scutwork. We solicited participation using the group e-mail feature available through the Scutwork application. We developed a survey containing a series of multiple-choice and free-text-entry questions and conducted it via the Internet using an online survey tool developed by SurveyMonkey.com. Responses were tabulated and percentages were calculated for each response.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Among the 1166 respondents:

- Male: 627 (54.1%)
- Female: 449 (38.5%)
- US Citizen: 463 (39.8%)
- Foreign National: 96 (8.2%)
- Permanent Resident: 75 (6.4%)
- US Medical School: 229 (19.6%)
- Foreign Medical School: 94 (8.1%)
- Intern: 481 (41.3%)
- Resident (Other than intern): 685 (58.7%)

Among 1166 current residents who previously used Scutwork:

- 780 (67.8%) used Scutwork to help decide which program to apply
- 690 (59.9%) used Scutwork to help decide which program at which to interview

These residents found Scutwork to be most useful at helping them:

- Decide where to apply (785, 68.3%)
- Decide where to interview (331, 28.8%)
- Prepare a rank-order for the match (310, 27%)

Among 854 (74.2%) residents who read reviews of their own program prior to their applications, 848 (99.3%) found the reviews to be somewhat to very accurate

Overall, 736 (64.9%) of residents believe Scutwork influenced their residency selection process

1056 (91.7%) of residents would use Scutwork to help research residency programs if they had to go through the match again

Among 1000 visitors:

- 543 (44.2%) used Scutwork to come up with questions for interviews
- 1037 (90.1%) found residency program reviews at Scutwork to be useful
- 848 (99.3%) found the reviews to be somewhat to very accurate
- 736 (64.9%) of residents believe Scutwork influenced their residency selection process
- 1056 (91.7%) of residents would use Scutwork to help research residency programs if they had to go through the match again

CONCLUSIONS

Applications are turning to web-based residency review systems for information during critical phases of the application process. In addition to the formal survey results, we received an overwhelming response in the free-text portion of the survey to further develop Scutwork. These encouragements along with the preliminary findings suggest not only that the reviews help applicants with their residency application process, but also that applicants feel a continued and vested interest in the expansion of this effort.