Results

- Preparation for the residency Match process is generally considered one of the most stressful times during medical school.
- Medical residency interviews are a critical element in the residency selection process, and as such, are often a significant source of stress.
- However, there is a relative paucity of medical literature to suggest best practices for residency interview preparation.
- Given the competitive nature of the Match, it is important for students to thoroughly prepare for the interview season.
- In addition, virtual interviews and their associated challenges are a critical component of modern recruitment.

Methods

- Three formal interview preparation opportunities were made available to M4 medical students.
- Students were surveyed after they submitted their Match lists using a SurveyMonkey.com survey which asked about survey opportunities they undertook, level of confidence in their preparation, and suggestions for future students.
- A Web search using Google.com and a literature search using PubMed.gov, Google.com, and Scholar.google.com was conducted with key words including medical student, residency, preparation, and interview.

Results

- Survey responses from 51 of 78 students were obtained (59%).
- Likert scale scores of 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 (strongly disagree to strongly agree) were combined.
- Interview: Useful in Preparing for Me to Interviews
  - Transition to M4 Interview: 21/46 (46%)
  - Other Interview Preparation: 10/11 (91%)
- I felt well-prepared for my interviews 43/46 (94%)

Conclusions

- A thorough and deliberate preparation for Match interviews positions resident candidates for confidence and success as they begin their high-stress interviews.
- Optional interview preparation can provide input in multiple spheres:
  - Technical assessment and optimization regarding internet connection, camera, lighting, background, and sound in preparation for virtual interviews.
  - Interpersonal communication strategies including eye contact, facial expression, and head nodding.
  - Realistic evaluation of strengths, weaknesses, and red flag topics (leave of absence, repeat of year, grade in clerkship for specialty for which student is applying) with appropriate preparation to answer questions regarding each of these.
- Development of “talking points” to highlight experiences and attributes that distinguish the candidate from other candidates and inspires interviewing faculty and residents to remember the candidate (“get in interviewer’s head”) and advocate for her/him/their when filling out assessments and when determining the department’s Match rank.
- Experience in answering anticipated (“known knows”) questions and feedback about responses.
- Experience in answering unusual questions and feedback about responses.
- Experience in preparation and pre-interview workshops where interviewers are known in advance for developing questions for department chairs, residency directors, facility, and residents when asked “Do you have any questions for me?”
- Medical students were highly appreciative of and most took advantage of the one or more optional opportunities to prepare for interviews.
- The availability of several preparation options allows students to choose the preparation that works for them.

Acknowledgments

- Brody Medical School Class of 2023 Medical Students
- East Carolina University Career Services Staff
- East Carolina Office of Student Affairs and Volunteer Faculty and Staff
- Brody School of Medicine
- Department of Pediatrics and Brody School of Medicine Office of Student Affairs, and
- Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, East Carolina University, Greenville, NC, USA.

References

- Preparation of Fourth Year Medical Students for Residency Interviews: An Important Educational Opportunity