

The Use of Social Media Amongst Podiatric Medical Students Applying for Residency

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Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study is to assess how social media affects Podiatric Medical students applying to Residency.

Introduction and Literature Review

Podiatric Medical students have a similar application process as counterparts of allopathic and osteopathic medical students. At the beginning of the third year of Podiatric Medical school, prospective applicants apply to prospective residency programs for one-month externships. These externships allow the prospective student to observe all aspects of a residency program, from a surgical, clinical and personality side. Each different Podiatric Medical school requires a different minimum number of externships during student's 4th year of schooling. Typically, the programs that prospective students extern at are the programs they apply to interview with and tend to be higher on rank lists that students submit prior to matching into a residency program. With the world of technology expanding quickly, the opportunity of prospective students learning about residency programs is expanding, with a trend of programs utilizing social media platforms such as Instagram accounts to display their programs, if effort to showcase their program and draw in candidates. Prior to the online availability of residency programs through social media, previous knowledge about programs was assumed to be from word of mouth from faculty members at prospective Podiatric Medical schools, past graduates or through visits of the program. There have been single-specialty studies that have shown that social media is used by prospective applicants during the residency recruitment process, but limited studies across specialties have been performed (1-5). These studies have only pertained to allopathic and osteopathic medical schools, not Podiatric medical students

Methods

The use of the Graduating Medical Education of Podiatric Medical Schools and contact information from schools was obtained and recorded. By use of Google forms, a comprehensive research survey was created Utilizing 15 questions changing from demographics including year in school and region of school, demographics of initial location of desire residency, and questions relating to what social media aspects prospective students utilize and find the most beneficial.

Methods Continued

This survey was then sent to contacts of each of the 11 podiatric medical schools with a summary of what the study pertained and what was being studied. It was mentioned that those who participated in the study consented to their anonymous responses being used for strictly research purposes only. Each e-mail to their respective podiatric medical school was sent out on the same exact day. The study was open for participation for exactly 1 month. Responses were anonymous and participation was not mandatory. Participants were allowed to exit the survey and not submit responses at any time if they did not wish to continue. There was no compensation for participation and no penalty for not participating. Mandatory criteria for participation in the study included that participants had to be an active member of one of the 11 podiatric medical schools in their first second, third or fourth year. There was no control group in this study, as it was purely observational. After the survey was closed the analytical aspect of Google forms was used to create graphs to represent the responses of prospective students.

Results

What year in Podiatric Medical School are you currently in? (77 responses)



Figure 1: Demographic characteristics

What is your gender? (77 responses)

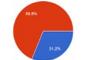


Figure 2: Demographic characteristics

What is your race or ethnicity? (77 responses)



Figure 3: Participant demographics

What is your preferred geographic region to match into residency? (77 responses)



Figure 4: Preferred Geographic region for residency in Participants

Results Continued

What social media platforms do you use on a daily basis? (Check all that apply) (77 responses)



Figure 5: Social Media Platforms Used Daily

How frequently did you use social media to learn about residency programs? (1 star: Non/minimal, 2 stars: Moderate, 3 stars Very Often) (77 responses)

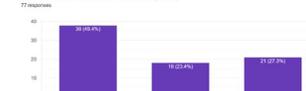


Figure 6: Frequency in Social Use to Learn about Residency Programs

How frequently did you use social media when deciding to interview at residency programs? (1 star: Non/minimal, 2 stars: Moderate, 3 stars Very Often) (77 responses)



Figure 7: Social influence on Students interviewing at Residency Programs

How frequently did you use social media platforms when deciding to apply to extern at residency programs? (1 star: Non/minimal, 2 stars: Moderate, 3 stars Very Often) (77 responses)

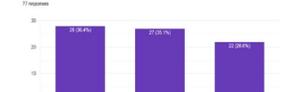


Figure 8: Social influence on Students externing at Residency Programs

How big of a role will a residency programs social media platform play in ranking residency programs? (1 star: Non/minimal, 2 stars: Moderate, 3 stars: Major) (77 responses)

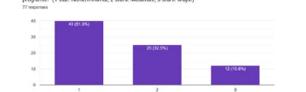


Figure 9: Social Influence on Students Ranking Residency Programs

What are some non-social media resources you used/will use to learn about residency programs? (Check all that apply) (77 responses)



Figure 10: Non-Social Media Resource Used to Learn about Residency Programs

Which of the following, if any, make you trust a residency programs social media platform? (Check all that apply) (77 responses)

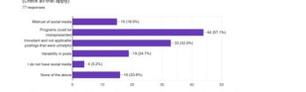


Figure 11: Non-Trust in Social Media Posts

What is your desired social media content when researching residency programs? (Check all that apply) (77 responses)



Figure 12: Desired Content in Social Media Posts

Discussion

This study aimed to assess how social media affects prospective podiatric medical students' decision in applying to residency. Through this study, valuable information was found to show the positives, negatives, and non-important information in social media. There are many variables that go into where a potential residency candidate chooses to apply and go to Residency. Some factors include but are not limited to geographic region of the residency program, perception of quality of training and personality fit amongst other variables. By conducting this study, it showed how social media platforms can play into an applicant's decision on whether to extern, apply and interview at a residency program. It was found that most candidates use Instagram on a day-to-day basis, showing that residency programs that have Instagram accounts could potentially showcase their program to attract candidates, or simply show candidates what their program looks like. One of the positives that can be drawn from this study is that applicants don't look for one specific social media platform or type of posting, they would like to see a holistic experience about a program including personalities, surgical and clinical cases, academics and attending to resident relationships. One of the biggest reoccurring themes in the type of responses at the end of the survey showed that participants truly valued a day in the life post on social media which would represent the holistic side of a resident experience. Some of the non-important information that was gained through this study was that many participants stated they do not use social media to research residency programs. It is important to note that some candidates don't use social media as a whole or even as a means of learning about a Residency program due to potential mistrust or misrepresentation of the program. This shows that having a social media platform will not make or break a potential candidate's decision on whether to extern, apply or interview at a residency program. However, some of the most important information found in the study is that social media can have a negative side that could potentially draw potential candidates away from residency programs. Some information that was found to be potentially negative was through type in responses at the end of the survey that asked about potential negative themes over and see programs which included old posts lack of diversity in posts non posting or postings focused around one specific aspect of the residency program. This study did reaffirm prior assumptions made about candidates and how they learn about prospective residency programs that the majority learn about programs through word of mouth from their perspective podiatric medical schools, either from faculty members or past graduates of the program who are at that respective residency program. This study has several limitations with the first being a survey-base research study, it is subject to selection and response bias

References

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