

COVID-19 Pandemic NRMP Match Analysis for Applicants to Integrated Interventional Radiology Residency

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Introduction

Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic the NRMP match process was conducted over virtual interviews with significant limitations of away rotations and site visits. It is hypothesized that programs would weigh certain applicant characteristics differently from prior years. The aim of this study is to assess the changes that occurred during the virtual application cycle for Interventional Radiology.

Methodology

An NRMP match database, TexasStar, was analyzed with 49 unmatched and 146 matched applicants surveyed between 2018 and 2021. Descriptive statistics and univariate logistic regression were performed on two groups separately, pre- and post-COVID applicants (n = 147 and 48, respectively). Odds ratios of applicant characteristics for a successful match in IR were quantified for both periods and then compared to one another.

Results

Study variables analyzed were geographic connection to program, number of honored rotations, USMLE examination scores, interviews attended, AOA, class rank, research year or other degree, type of medical degree, and number of away rotations. Percentage of MDs matched to IR positions versus other applicant types (DO, IMG) did not significantly change between 2020 and 2021 (80.4% vs 81.9%, $p = 0.73$). Percent of unmatched positions did not significantly change between 2020 and 2021 (94.8% vs 95.7%, $p = 0.72$). Significant predictors of a successful match for both pre- and post-COVID eras included total interviews offered (1.11 and 1.33, $p < 0.01$) and total interviews accepted (1.14 and 1.17, $p < 0.05$). Predictors for a successful match prior to COVID included total applications submitted (1.03, $p = 0.02$), Step 2 scores (1.04, $p < 0.01$), number of honored rotations (1.32, $p < 0.01$), and total number of away rotations (1.85, $p < 0.01$). Predictors for a successful match post-COVID included holding another academic degree (PhD, MS, etc.) or research year (5.81, $p < 0.01$).

Significant Predictors of Successful Match from 2020-2021

Pre-COVID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total Applications Submitted USMLE/COMLEX 2 Scores # of Honored Rotations # of Away/Out Rotations
Both Pre- and Post-COVID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of Interviews Offered Total # of Interviews Accepted
Post-COVID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Holding an Additional Academic Degree (PhD, MS, etc)

Conclusion

Total interviews offered and accepted has consistently been a significant predictor of a successful match during both pre- and post-COVID match cycles. Away rotations were previously held in high regard but were no longer a significant predictor during COVID, owed to their very limited availability. While Step 2 scores and number of honored rotations were significant predictors of matching in IR prior to COVID, it is suspected that they were not significantly predictive in this cohort due to limited sample size.