Navigating the Residency Match as an LGBT Applicant

August 22, 2016

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Learning Objectives

By the end of this session participants will be able to:

- Describe the rules governing questions that can be asked of program applicants during the residency interview process.

- Discuss concerns related to openly sharing one's identity as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender during the residency interview process.

- Compare and contrast the experiences of 5 LGBT residents who recently went through different match processes, including the individual NRMP match, the couples match, and the military match.
Match Rules
René Salazar, MD

- Assistant Dean for Diversity
  University of Texas at Austin Dell Medical School

- Former Director of Diversity,
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MATCH COMMUNICATION CODE OF CONDUCT

PURPOSE

The National Resident Matching Program® (NRMP®) seeks to maintain the highest professional standards in the conduct of its Matching Program and expects all applicants and programs to conduct their affairs in a professionally responsible manner. Interactions between applicants and program directors during the interview and matching processes must be guided by the Match Participation Agreement, especially Section 6.0 Restrictions on Persuasion, which makes it clear that applicants and program directors should be free to make decisions on a uniform schedule and without coercion or undue or unwarranted pressure.

The NRMP and the Council of Medical Specialty Societies Organization of Program Director Associations have partnered to create this Match Communication Code of Conduct, which serves as a guide for all residency program staff involved in the interviewing and matching processes.

CODE

To promote the highest ethical standards during the interview, ranking, and matching processes, program directors participating in a Match shall commit to:
Match Communication Code of Conduct

- Respect an applicant’s right to privacy and confidentiality
  - *Program directors (PDs) and an other interviewers shall not ask identifying information about other programs.*

- Accept responsibility for the actions of recruitment team members
  - *PDs shall assume responsibility for the actions of the entire interview team.*
Match Communication Code of Conduct

- Decline to require visiting rotations or second visits
  - PD’s shall not require visiting rotations/second visits or imply that second visits are used in determining applicant placement on a rank order list.

- Discouraging unnecessary post-interview communication
  - PD’s shall not solicit or require post-interview communication from applicants or engage in disingenuous post-interview communication.
Match Communication Code of Conduct

- Refraining from asking illegal or coercive questions
  - Age
  - Gender
  - Religion
  - Sexual orientation
  - Family Status
Match Communication Code of Conduct

- Refraining from asking illegal or coercive questions
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Match Rules

- Federal and state laws prohibit non-job related questions
  - Race
  - Ethnicity
  - Gender
  - Religion
  - Marital status
  - Age
  - Sexual orientation
### Original Research

**Potentially Discriminatory Questions During Residency Interviews: Frequency and Effects on Residents’ Ranking of Programs in the National Resident Matching Program**

**Abstract**

**Background**
Medical students rank residency programs as part of the selection process in the National Resident Matching Program, also known as the match. Applicants to medical residency positions are protected against discriminatory employment practices by federal employment laws.

**Objectives**
To explore students’ recall of being asked potentially illegal or discriminatory questions during the selection interview, and whether these questions affected students’ ranking of the programs in the match.

**Methods**
Fourth-year medical students from a single medical school were surveyed after the match. Students were questioned about their recall of the frequency of potentially illegal or discriminatory interview questions and their effect on the program's rank.

**Results**
Ninety percent of the 63 respondents in the study remember being asked at least one potentially discriminatory question. Among these, students were asked about their marital status (86%), about children (31%), about plans for pregnancy (10%), where they were born (54%) and/or about their national origin (15%), and about religious and ethical beliefs (24%). The majority of students did not think the questions changed their decision to rank the program, although the questions changed the way some students ranked the program, either lowering or raising the rank.

**Conclusion**
Nearly all students reported that they were asked at least one potentially discriminatory question, although these questions for the most part do not appear to affect whether they ranked the programs.

**Authors**
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Individual Match

Dre Irizarry, MD

- Jefferson Medical College
- General Surgery Resident at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center
- Postdoctoral Research Fellow at Stanford University Medical Center
My Application and Interviews

- President of LGBTQ group
- Spoke about partner during interviews
- No essays specifically discussing sexual orientation/gender identity
What I looked for in programs

- “Out” people in program
- General sense of residents and attendings
  - Night before dinner, second look
- State laws
- Hospital/university resources
Advice/Lessons Learned

- Decide what is most important to you

- Do not sacrifice comfort or happiness, residency is challenging enough

- Think about hospital/university/city/state climate

- Think about timeline – it will likely not be easier or more convenient to come out "later"
“And the day came when the risk to remain tight in a bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom.”

– Anaïs Nin
Lessons Learned

- Don’t be afraid to be yourself
- Be honest and realistic about where you want to end up
- Be realistic about what you want and need out of residency
Military Match

- Similar to civilian: one application, then interviews
- More standardized interview process
- Three outcomes
  - Match military program
  - Civilian deferment
  - No match, or prelim year
Don’t be afraid to be yourself

- DADT and DOMA are gone
- Scope out the residents
Be honest and realistic about where you want to end up

- They take your preferences into account
- Urban/rural, type of program
- Family circumstances
Don’t put all your eggs in one basket

- Don’t bank on civilian deferment or military match

- Have a Plan B that you are also excited about
Individual Match
Chelsea Dawn Unruh, MD

- Poznań University of Medical Sciences in Poznań, Poland
- International Medical Graduate (IMG)
- US citizen
- Chief Resident at Providence St Peter Family Medicine in Olympia, Washington
Influences on my application process:

- International Medical Graduate
- Desire for full spectrum Family Medicine with OB
- Location preference (Pacific Northwest)
- LGBTQ friendly community
Things that influenced my interviews:

- Single during interviews and match
- Moving from very gendered country (Poland)
- Nothing mentioned in personal statement
Things that influenced my choice:

- Location
- Program
- Feel of the program, people, and night before dinner
- Feel of the city/queer scene or proximity to queer scene
Lessons Learned

- Follow your gut.
- You don’t get what you don’t ask for.
Couples Match
Jeffrey Eugene, MD and Joseph Langham, MD

Our Story
Negotiating the Couples Match

- Mentors
- Learning about the Couples Match
- The decision to be “out” in the Match
Interviews

- What we looked for in a program
- Scheduling interviews
- The “feel” of the program
- Talking openly about each other
Rank List and The Match

- Feel of the program
- Where we would feel accepted
- Location
- Program that met our career goals
Lessons Learned

- Make the decision for yourself to be “out”
- Prioritize your wants for a residency program
- Follow the “feeling”
- *Being out in the workplace*
Please use the Q&A panel located on the right side of your screen to submit your questions. Send your questions to “All Panelists.”
Contact Information

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