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Title

Social Media Use of Family Medicine Applicants During the 2021-2022 Match Cycle

Priority 1 (Research Category)

Education and training

Presenters

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Abstract

Context: The COVID-19 pandemic significantly affected both the 2021 and 2022 residency recruitment cycles. Many programs rapidly shifted their recruitment efforts to include a greater presence on social media (SoMe), assuming that applicants would use these avenues as supplemental sources of information.

Objective: Our program sought to investigate the impact of SoMe from the perspective of applicants during the Family Medicine Virtual Match process.

Study Design: Cross-sectional survey.

Setting: Community Based University Affiliated Family Medicine Residency.

Population Studied: Family medicine residency candidates selected to interview with our program.

Intervention/Instrument: We gathered survey data through REDCap of interviewees to our residency program to assess social media use. We also acquired SoMe (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter) and google website analytics to obtain trends trafficking users to our official residency website.

Outcome Measures: Survey items captured candidate preferences regarding recruitment. Facebook/Instagram “reach” and Twitter “impressions” were analyzed to evaluate SoMe engagement. Google analytics data were used to quantify sources of traffic.

Results: n=55 completed the survey for a response rate of 28%. Participants indicated Instagram was most helpful in evaluating programs (45.5%, n=25), followed by Twitter (5.5%, n=3), and Facebook (3.6%, n=2). About half of participants stated they did not use SoMe to learn about programs at all (45.5%, n=25), whereas a fifth agreed or strongly agreed that SoMe played a vital role (21.7%, n=12). When residency website traffic was linked to SoMe analytics, we saw a small increase in activity with our program accounts after content generation, but this did not translate into increased website visits, our surrogate marker representing successful use of SoMe as a recruitment tool. Analysis of the traffic

sources to our website revealed that Google was the greatest driver to our website, more than SoMe platforms.

Outcomes: We expected candidates would utilize social media more than reported and increased SoMe content would increase website traffic. Though our findings are discordant with the previous studies, our data suggest SoMe is less significant in recruitment than we initially hypothesized. This was one of few studies aimed at the applicant experience, and further investigation is needed to better understand the different ways in which SoMe and other virtual platform.