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PURPOSE/OBJECTIVES

The National Resident Matching Program (NRMP) aka: “The Match”, outlines strict professional rules of behavior addressing the following areas

- Respect of applicants right to privacy and confidentiality
- Acceptance of responsibility for actions of recruitment team
- Refraining from illegal or coercive questions
- Not requiring second visits or visiting rotations
- Discouraging post-interview communication

The specific aim of this study was to examine applicant reported prevalence of behaviors that conflict with the NRMP Code of Conduct.

MATERIALS/ METHODS

In April 2013 following the release of Match results, an anonymous online survey was sent to all 171 applicants to the Oregon Health and Science University Radiation Oncology Residency.

Participants were asked about their experiences during the Match, observed behaviors and overall impressions of the application and matching process for radiation oncology.

RESULTS

Responses were obtained from 87 of 171 residency applicants for response rate of 51%. Ninety-percent of respondents matched into radiation oncology

Demographics of 2013 OHSU Radiation Oncology Applicants		
	N	%
Gender		
Male	56	69
Female	25	31
Race		
Asian	19	24
Black/African American	3	4
Hispanic/Latino	2	2
White/Caucasian	50	62
Other	2	2
Number of away rotations	Median: 2 (0-5)	
Number of interview invites	Median: 15 (0-46)	
Number of attended interviews	Median: 12 (0-24)	

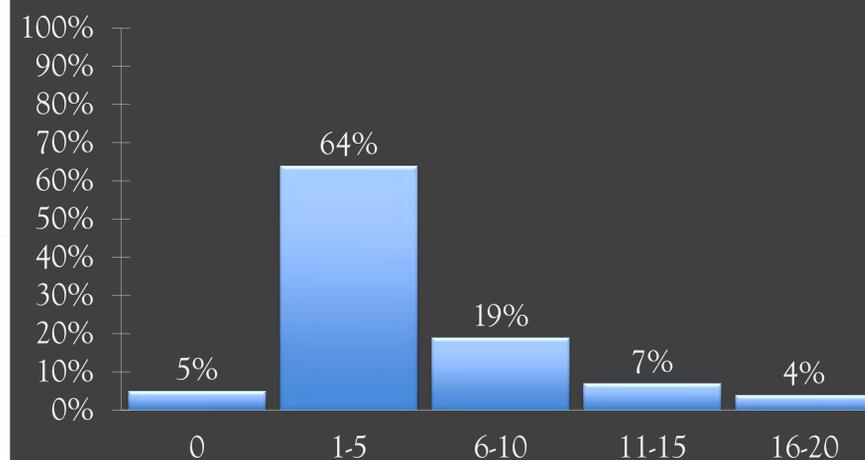
2013 Applicant Experiences During Match Process

	Percent responding "Yes"
Conflict with NRMP Code of Conduct	
Asked about marital or relationship status	60%
Asked where they would be ranked/which program you would rank number one	28%
Asked about having or plans to have children	22%
Told by program that you were "ranked to match" or rank position	17%
Knowledge of rank position affected rank-list	27%
Offered incentives such as future faculty position, special rotations, etc.	8%
Asked about religion	5%
Offered a residency position outside the Match	1%

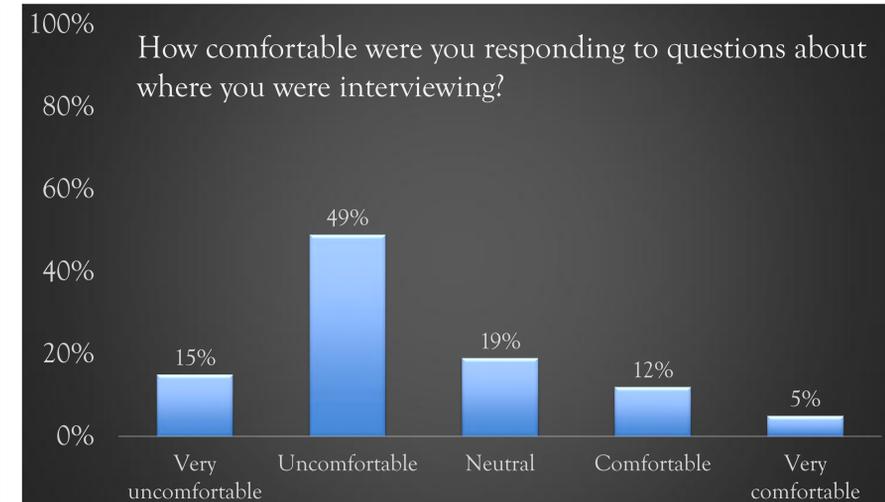
Applicants reported variable prevalence of behaviors/question topics that constitute violations of the NRMP Code of Conduct. Stratified analysis did not demonstrate difference in the prevalence of illegal questions based on the gender of the applicant.

Eighty-seven percent of respondents reported being asked where else they were interviewing, which is considered a violation of applicant's right to privacy and confidentiality.

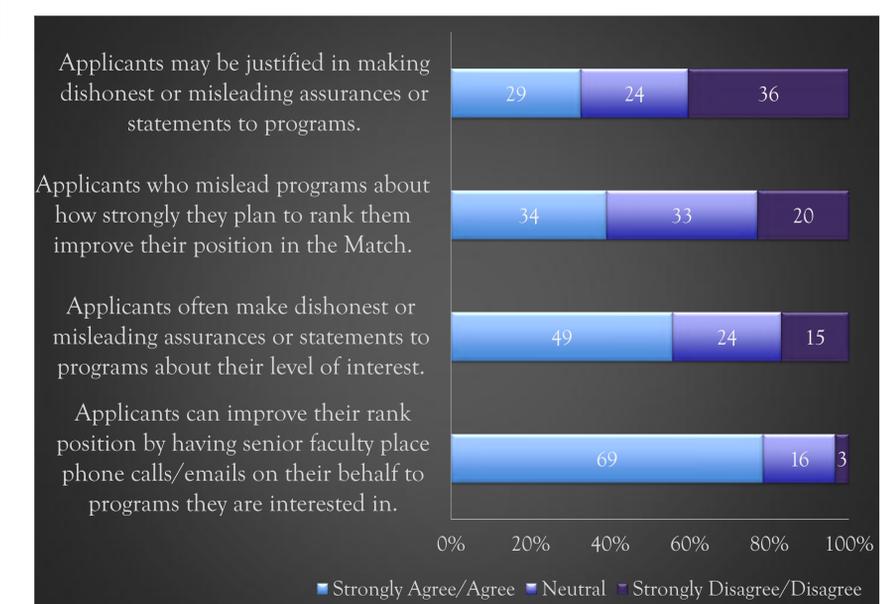
How many times were you asked where else you were interviewing?



“I cannot stress how uncomfortable I felt when asked where I was interviewing. However, it was so pervasive (happened at least once at each program) that to say “no”, I feared I would stick out in a negative way. I was also told at one program that to match there I would have to declare that the program was my top choice...”



Fifty-two percent of respondents reported that they had received unsolicited contact from programs that was not in direct response to a question or inquiry. The majority of applicants felt that their rank position could be improved by having faculty place calls or send emails on their behalf.



CONCLUSIONS

Ninety-percent of respondents were asked at least one question in conflict with NRMP Code of Conduct with general sense that dishonesty is part of the Match process.

The vast majority of respondents believe that they can improve their rank position by having phone calls made on their behalf.

While impossible to determine context of discussions, residency programs and representatives may benefit from reminders of acceptable communication with applicants.