Virtual Interviews: A Novel Approach to Meeting Preliminary Medicine Applicants
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**Problem**
- Medical students incur significant costs for residency interviews,\(^1\) with potential added costs for those needing a preliminary internship
- Interviews and overviews require valuable faculty time
- Logistically impossible to interview every preliminary internship candidate while on campus for his/her advanced training interview

**Innovation**
- Replaced live faculty overview with video overview, accessible to both virtual (VI) and in person (IP) interviewees on a password protected site
- Both groups received an email before their interview prompting them to view the introduction
- Students chosen for IP interviews scheduled themselves in ERAS scheduler
- Virtual interviews were offered to students who had visited our campus, but could not interview for a preliminary year on the same date as their advanced position interview
- Virtual interviews conducted over smart phones via a free video conferencing application, BlueJeans
- Both types of interviews were 20 minutes in length and conducted by the same 4 faculty
- We developed an electronic survey to assess perceptions of the video introduction and interview

**Results**
- 40 VI interviews; 68 IP interviews
- All offered a virtual interview accepted the opportunity
- Survey response rate: 51% (VI 57.14%, IP 47.47%)
- Independent samples 2-tailed t-test compared responses between VI and IP applicants
- No statistically significant difference regarding applicants’ perceptions about the video introduction to the program or their interview experience
- Both groups preferred advance access to the video (p=0.269), and thought it better prepared them to ask more meaningful interview questions (p=0.051)
- Two thirds of those who interviewed for advanced positions in person would have accepted a virtual interview invitation
- Only 50% of applicants who interviewed virtually would have made a separate trip to interview in person
- Using a video introduction saved 15.5 hours of faculty time in an interview season

**Discussion**
- With 6.4% of IM preliminary spots unfilled in 2018,\(^2\) novel approaches to meeting applicants should be embraced
- Virtual interviews can decrease costs and time away from rotations\(^3\) if return or prolonged site visits are eliminated
- Our study shows that virtual interviews are a viable alternative to in-person interviews for the preliminary internship
- An initial investment of time creating a high quality video introduction resulted in an overall decrease in required faculty time
- All applicants preferred the video introduction
- All applicants felt they were able to portray their strengths to the interviewer
- Video interviews allowed us to capture applicants who would not have otherwise interviewed
- Limitations:
  - Lack of generalizability to categorical position interviews
  - Small sample size prohibits examining differences in match rates between VI and IP interviewees

**Bibliography**