

Unraveling the Myth of the Audition Elective

Jennifer Reiser, MD

James L. Harper, MD

Gary L. Beck, MA

Department of Pediatrics

University of Nebraska Medical Center



Background

- Studies demonstrating either no benefit or minimal benefit in getting an interview, but no benefit in rank.
 - South Dakota (no benefit)
 - University of South Florida (better chance of interview, but no effect on ranking.)

Teach Learn Med. 2000 Spring;12(2):78-80.

Am J Surg. 1995 Mar;169(3):338-40.

Hypothesis

- Audition electives continue to play an integral role on securing residency interviews.

Study Design

- IRB approved study
- All M4's doing off campus electives were surveyed from 2005 to 2007.
- Students consented to allow program directors at the schools where they did rotations complete a survey.
- Data analyzed by frequency and qualitative analysis.
- Participants: 70 students and 44 program directors.
- Students participated in electives in 18 different areas of medicine.

Results

- Response rate:
 - 59 students (84%)
 - 32 program directors (72%)

Question 1 (M4): Why did you do the elective?

“To look at the program”

“To increase my chances of matching”

“To determine if the city is right for me”

“Topic not available at UNMC”

“Recommended to do it by advisor”

“Required to do one to match”

Question 2 (M4):

Why did the elective either help or hurt your chances of matching?

“Got better letters of recommendation”

“Performance on rotation”

“Interactions with residents and faculty”

“They got to know me”

“Required to get an interview”

Results of Program Directors' Surveys

	Yes	%
Did AE influence student's ranking?	40	86.96

Of the following, what other factors do you consider in rank list preparation?
(select top 3)

	Yes	%
Interview	39	84.78
USMLE Scores	33	71.74
Letters of Rec.	23	50
Resident comments	21	45.65
Dean's Letter	20	43.48
Transcript	18	39.13
Extra-curr. activities	9	19.57

PD Criteria for Match Lists

Criteria	Average	Criteria	Average
Transcript	3.57	Class Rank	3.50
USMLE Scores	3.85	Letters of Rec	3.60
MSPE	3.26	Chair's Letter	3.00
Interview	4.67	Research	2.69
Community Svc	2.58	Sr. Elective Eval	4.07
Elective performance	3.54	<u>Audition Elective</u>	<u>3.69</u>

Averaged from a 5-point scale (1=not important to 5=crucial)

PD Top 5 Ranking of Match List Criteria

	Criteria	1	2	3	4	5
1	Interview	18	7	5	6	1
2	USMLE Scores	5	6	8	6	5
3	Letters of Rec	2	5	2	6	11
4	<u>Audition Elective</u>	2	3	7	5	6
5	Sr. Elective Evals	1	6	7	4	3
6	MSPE	4	3	3	4	2
6	Class Rank	4	1	3	4	4
7	Transcript	2	4	3	3	2
8	Elective Performances	2	3	0	1	2
9	Research	0	0	0	2	2
10	Chair Letter	0	1	2	0	0

Ranking based on sum of frequency of top 5 choices.

Question 5 (PD):

How did the elective influence rank?

“Student’s performance”

“Know student’s “fit” with our program,
personality”

“Academic record vs clinical ability”

“Must do a rotation”

“Had no effect”

Question 6 (PD)

How do you think AE's impact on rank?

“Helps if good/bad performance”

“Very important”

“Minimally important”

Discussion

- 86.96% of responding PD's reported that they did factor in a student's AE in ranking decisions.
- Qualitative analysis shows a divergence of opinion between program directors on the importance of audition electives.

Limitations

- Qualitative Study
- One medical school
- Small Sample Size
 - Could not correlate responses to programs or specialties