

Criteria for Selecting Retina Fellows by Retina Fellowship Directors in the United States

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PURPOSE

To determine which criteria are important and used by retina fellowship directors in their selection of fellows.

METHODS

A survey was sent to 85 retina, 60 cornea and external disease, and 50 glaucoma fellowships in the United States and Canada listed in the San Francisco Matching Program regarding criteria for selecting fellows. A cover letter explained the questionnaire, using a Likert Scale of 1-9, addressing application material requested by programs. The fellowship directors were asked to indicate which criteria they felt were the most important component of the application. In addition, the directors for retina and cornea fellowships were asked if they were in favor of ACGME accreditation in their respective fields. The mean score for each question was calculated.

RESULTS

A total of 75% completed retina questionnaires were received (73% of academic and 80% of private practice programs). The most important criteria for fellow selection were applicant's ability to work and communicate with colleagues and patients, the interview, and letters of recommendation from retina faculty (8.49, 8.39, and 7.78 on the Likert Scale, respectively). Least important criteria were whether an applicant had a PhD or MPH, other advanced degrees, and the personal statement (4.57, 3.97, 5.25, respectively). Response rate from cornea programs was 85% and from glaucoma programs was 88%. The most important criteria for cornea programs were the interview, the ability to work and communicate with colleagues and patients, and the letters of recommendation from cornea and external diseases faculty (8.44, 8.25, and 7.82, respectively). The glaucoma responses were similar with the most important criteria being the ability to work and communicate with colleagues and patients.

CONCLUSION

Based on the responses of the retina fellowship directors, the leading criteria for selecting fellows are the ability to work and communicate with colleagues and patients, the interview itself, and the letters of recommendation from retina faculty. There are similar criteria for selecting cornea and glaucoma fellows. Opinions regarding ACGME accreditation remain divided.