

Interviewing: Residency Select – A New Pilot Program

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As we all know, choosing the perfect medical student for residency does not always translate into an overachieving performance as a resident. Each member of the selection committee attempts to sift through a candidate's CV, grades, board scores and letters of recommendation trying to find the perfect fit for their program. This process can be tedious, as the application numbers are high and the applicant pool is filled with highly qualified students. It is nearly impossible to sort out those that will fit in with your program. Recently, Joseph D. Zuckerman, MD and Kenneth A. Egol, MD, from NYU Hospital for Joint Diseases teamed up with the company, *Residency Select*, to initiate the development of a new data point for the selection process.

Residency Select is a program that utilizes psychometric assessments to aid in selecting students that best fit the personality of your program. Using assessments and performance processes based on those established by Fortune 500 companies, residency program leadership and applying students are subjected to a series of surveys (Job Evaluation Tool [JET] for the faculty/subject matter experts and the Residency Select Hogan Assessment for the medical student/applicant). The JET establishes the program's specific profile and is based upon the responses from the faculty and select high performing residents. The goal is to have all active staff complete the surveys including remote sites that your residents will rotate, in order to get an accurate personality of the program as a whole. Concomitantly, nationwide data is pooled to determine the overall consensus of what an ideal orthopaedic-student candidate should be. The ultimate hope is that if the pilot is successful, then all students will complete such surveys as part of the application process and this, in turn can then be used to compile a list of candidates that would be a good "fit" and should receive an interview.

Currently, the Residency Select Hogan Assessment is completed by the medical students chosen to be interviewed by your program (surveys only completed after selected to interview). Again, if the pilot is successful this may be an objective marker to add to a board score cut-off/routine application screening so that students that you may have missed in the past will have their applications more closely scrutinized. This may aid in finding the diamond in the rough, that 7th round draft pick that becomes an all-star. Furthermore it may ultimately be utilized to determine if students are even a good "fit" for orthopaedics and help with career counseling.

Once these steps have been completed, this data is used in conjunction with each program's existing method of creating a rank list to help assess the fit between the program and the applicant. Residency Select provides a "FIT" report for each applicant that is based upon data collected from 12 geographically diverse programs around the US (including Rush University as one of the pilot study sites). In the future the ideal student to apply for an orthopaedic residency may be ferreted out utilizing more data from programs across the country.

Additionally, a report is issued, which outlines information specific to your program. Since each program will have a different “personality” based upon the response of the faculty, this process may provide an objective way to better match students with the “right” program and/or specialty. The program requires approximately 45 minutes of your faculty and applicant’s time to complete the survey. Although, the company is completing its pilot study this year, it may provide an additional objective data point in the selection process.

Clearly, there is no easy process to select the perfect class of residents, and even when this may happen on paper, it does not always translate as such, to real life. With the advent of the electronic application the process has become easy for an individual to apply to 60-80 programs with a couple of mouse clicks. As we are all faced with greater numbers of applications and highly qualified individuals, it becomes necessary to draw a line in the sand, which typically is an arbitrary board score number. This may lead to missing out on many excellent candidates that fall just short of this number. If this pilot program proves successful it may be possible to draw that line in the sand after matching the student's personality with your programs. While many student characteristics are assessed with these surveys several have been identified as key factors in matching a student to an orthopedic residency. Based upon the responses of the twelve pilot programs the following characteristics were amongst several to be deemed important, including but not limited to: calm under pressure, perceptive, interested in learning new techniques, detail-oriented, trusting, practical, and interested in improving patient care and being known for having a strong work-ethic. The business world has successfully used this means for evaluations and promotions. It might be time that we incorporate such measures into our selection process and take a page out of the business world's book.

Brett R. Levine, MD, does not have a commercial relationship with Residency Select. Rush University Medical Center is part of the pilot program discussed above.

The American Orthopaedic Association does not endorse nor sponsor the tool listed above.