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EDITORIAL COMMENT



This is an important and thoughtful article that evaluates the Urology Match and specifically postinterview communications and their potential impact on Program Directors. The authors surveyed all Program Directors in the 2017 Match cycle and 61% responded. Almost all programs (98%) received postinterview communications from applicants, and 76% received an informal commitment from an applicant, which was often misleading. Most program directors felt that promises by applicants did not influence their rank list, and 57% responded that second look visits also did not influence the applicant's rank order. The authors conclude that most Urology Program Directors do not find significant value in continued contact with applicants after the interview, and they suggest that such communications should remain limited, perhaps restricted to the Electronic Residency Application Service system so that they can be readily monitored to ensure that there is no “gaming” of the Match.

This represents yet another in a series of articles that have raised concern about various aspects of the Match Process in Urology and other competitive fields of medicine.^{1–5} Just this past year *Urology* has published at least 2 articles looking at the Match from the perspective of the candidates.^{1,2} The main

findings were that the majority of candidates reported receiving postinterview communications from at least 1 program, many of which were verbal, which is prohibited, and in some cases these communications were misleading to the candidate. Many candidates were asked to reveal where they would be ranking a program, and inappropriate queries regarding marital status or plans for having children were also reported, which could negatively impact female candidates. Second look visits were also “strongly encouraged” by some programs, which is particularly burdensome and likely has unfair socioeconomic implications. The authors proposed that we should consider banning all forms of postinterview communication, which some other disciplines have already done.

We hope that these articles will stimulate further discussion as the American Urological Association and the Society of Academic Urologist work to ensure the fairest and most equitable practices regarding the Urology Match process. Given the vagaries of human nature and the insecurity that is often engendered by such a competitive process, perhaps it is time to consider more strict policies regarding appropriate conduct during the Match process, particularly regarding issues related to postinterview communications and second-look visits. Such policies may need to be reviewed in an even more robust manner at the start of each interview season, and increased awareness about the mechanisms in place for anonymous reporting of potential violations may also be helpful. The recent literature about this topic strongly suggests that there is much room for improvement, which may have great impact on the future of our field.

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AUTHOR REPLY



We thank the commenters for their interest in this paper. Although recent reports, including the current article, have highlighted the pitfalls of postinterview communication, we still believe in the potential of postinterview communication to enhance the Match.^{1,2} We join with the commenters in calling for solutions to realize this potential.

One possible solution, as outlined in the above manuscript, is to require that all postinterview communication be conducted