Match Violations: Proposed Solutions

SAU Task Force Report

Society of Academic Urology

Simone Thavaseelan, MD
Assistant Professor of Surgery/Urology
Residency Program Director
Brown University/Rhode Island Hospital
Section Chief, Providence VAMC
Providence, RI
• I have no disclosures
How to Improve the Current Match

Urology Residency Training in 2030

Recruiting & Retaining Minorities & Women in Urology

Common Assessment Tools
## Goals and Objectives of the Match Violations Task Force

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Define</th>
<th>Adequately define match violations, assess the current rules as per NRMP vs AUA/SAU</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Examine</td>
<td>Thoroughly examine the prevalence and type of urology match violations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Propose and recommend</td>
<td>Propose and recommend guidelines and policy for the AUA/SAU Match regarding Match Violations including consequences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effect</td>
<td>Effect change at the level of the AUA and SAU that more effectively mitigates future violations, intentional or not</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SAU Task Force
Proposed Solutions to Match Violations

• Maude Carmel, MD (UTSW/ TX, South Central Section)
• Kirsten Green, MD (UCSF/ CA, Western Section)
• Sammy Elsamra, MD (UMDNJ, New York Section)
• Stephanie Kielb, MD (Northwestern/IL, North Central Section)
• Kathleen Kiernan, MD (UWash/WA, Western Section)
• Jay Simhas, MD (Einstein Urology/ Temple/ PA, Mid Atlantic Section)
• Simone Thavaseelan, MD (Brown/RI; New England Section)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Define</th>
<th>Adequately define match violations, assess the existing NRMP policies and procedures on Match Violations and investigations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Propose and recommend</td>
<td>Propose and recommend guidelines for the AUA/SAU Match regarding Match Violations including consequences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effect</td>
<td>Effect change at the level of the AUA and SAU that more effectively mitigates future violations, intentional or not</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Urology Residency Match Guidelines for Programs

- All vacancies in each program will be offered as part of the match.
- No offers or commitments to "rank an applicant first on my list" will be made to applicants before the match.
- No verbal contact with applicants will be made by anyone from a program after the interviews. Contact by letter is permissible.
- No offers will be made to an applicant outside the match until after the match is completed.
- Programs agree to accept any applicant submitted on their ranking list.
- Programs agree that after the match no commitments will be made with an applicant matched with a different program unless there is mutual agreement between all three parties including both program directors and the applicant.

Post-Interview Contact

- Contact by letter or email is always permissible.
- Telephone contact initiated by a program director or department personnel at any level is considered undue pressure and should not take place.
- Telephone calls from applicants are acceptable.
- See Urology Residency Match Guidelines for Programs for more details.

http://www.auanet.org/education/auauniversity/residents/residency/urology-and-specialty-matches
NRMP Code of Conduct

- Respecting an applicant’s right to privacy and confidentiality: Program directors and other interviewers may freely express their interest in a candidate, but they shall not ask an applicant to disclose the names, specialties, geographic location, or other identifying information about programs to which the applicant has or may apply.

- Accepting responsibility for the actions of recruitment team members: Program directors shall instruct all interviewers about compliance with Match policies and the need to ensure that all applicant interviews are conducted in an atmosphere that is safe, respectful, and nonjudgmental. Program directors shall assume responsibility for the actions of the entire interview team.

- Refraining from asking illegal or coercive questions: Program directors shall recognize the negative consequences that can result from questions about age, gender, religion, sexual orientation, and family status, and shall ensure that communication with applicants remains focused on the applicant’s goodness of fit within their programs.

- Declining to require second visits or visiting rotations: Program directors shall respect the logistical and financial burden many applicants face in pursuing multiple interactions with programs and shall not require them or imply that second visits are used in determining applicant placement on a rank order list.

- Discouraging unnecessary post-interview communication: Program directors shall not solicit or require post-interview communication from applicants, nor shall program directors engage in post-interview communication that is disingenuous for the purpose of influencing applicants’ ranking preferences.

NRMP Code of Conduct” (http://www.nrmp.org/communication-code-of-conduct/)
Respecting an applicant’s right to privacy and confidentiality Program directors and other interviewers may freely express their interest in a candidate, but they shall not ask an applicant to disclose the names, specialties, geographic location, or other identifying information about programs to which the applicant has or may apply.

Accepting responsibility for the actions of recruitment team members Program directors shall instruct all interviewers about compliance with Match policies and the need to ensure that all applicant interviews are conducted in an atmosphere that is safe, respectful, and nonjudgmental. Program directors shall assume responsibility for the actions of the entire interview team.

Refraining from asking illegal or coercive questions Program directors shall recognize the negative consequences that can result from questions about age, gender, religion, sexual orientation, and family status, and shall ensure that communication with applicants remains focused on the applicant’s goodness of fit within their programs.

Declining to require second visits or visiting rotations Program directors shall respect the logistical and financial burden many applicants face in pursuing multiple interactions with programs and shall not require them or imply that second visits are used in determining applicant placement on a rank order list.

Discouraging unnecessary post-interview communication Program directors shall not solicit or require post-interview communication from applicants, nor shall program directors engage in post-interview communication that is disingenuous for the purpose of influencing applicants’ ranking preferences.

NRMP Code of Conduct
http://www.nrmp.org/communication-code-of-conduct/
**DEFINE MATCH VIOLATIONS:**

Comparing - AUA website “Urology Residency Match Guidelines for Programs” to - NRMP Code of Conduct and Match Participation Agreement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Match Violations</th>
<th>AUA Match Guidelines</th>
<th>NRMP Code of Conduct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Offers or commitments of ranking to applicants before match</td>
<td>unacceptable</td>
<td>unacceptable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offers outside the match</td>
<td>unacceptable</td>
<td>unacceptable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decline to honor the binding match commitment</td>
<td>unacceptable</td>
<td>unacceptable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Post interview Communication**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AUA Match Guidelines</th>
<th>NRMP Code of Conduct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>initiated by program - unacceptable</td>
<td>discouraged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>initiated by applicant - acceptable</td>
<td>discouraged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>email</td>
<td>acceptable</td>
<td>discouraged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>letter</td>
<td>acceptable</td>
<td>discouraged</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Reveal/disclose applicant’s rank intentions, programs or locations applied to | not specifically mentioned | unacceptable |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ask illegal questions during interview</th>
<th>not specifically mentioned</th>
<th>unacceptable (illegal questions well defined based on age, gender, religion, sexual orientation, family status)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Require second visits or visiting rotations</td>
<td>not specifically mentioned</td>
<td>Program shall not require them or imply they are used in determining applicant placement on rank list</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

http://www.nrmp.org/communication-code-of-conduct
http://www.auanet.org/education/auauniversity/residents/residency/urology-and-specialty-matches
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Define</th>
<th>Adequately define match violations, assess the existing NRMP policies and procedures on Match Violations and investigations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Examine</td>
<td>Thoroughly examine the prevalence and type of urology match violation violations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effect</td>
<td>Effect change at the level of the AUA and SAU that more effectively mitigates future violations, intentional or not</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Surveyed all 231 applicants to a single New Jersey urology residency program in the 2017 Match cycle and obtained a response rate of 34% (n = 78)
  - 60% of respondents reported post interview communication
  - 26% were asked to reveal where they would rank a program
  - 19% reported post interview communication caused them to rank a program higher than initially planned
  - Post interview communication via telephone was associated with significantly increased odds of matching at the contacting program
    - (odds ratio 20.0, 95% confidence interval 2.12-188.66, P = 0.003)
“I was asked at almost every interview if I was planning on having kids in the near future”

“I was asked if I was an ‘illegal immigrant’”

“I was pressured to go to a second look (out of) fear that I would not be ranked”

“It was uncomfortable when a program stated ‘let us know if we will be on the top of your list’”

“Personally, I had no time or money to plan a second look, which I believe put me at a disadvantage for one of my top picks”

“They were encouraging me to send a letter of intent, with subtle implication of being ranked higher if you did”

“One program made me tell them how many programs I applied to, how many interview offers I got, and then list off every program I interviewed at. Then they asked me my relationship status.”
• 35% of respondents believed they were asked an inappropriate question

• 85% of women compared to 45% of men reported being asked about one of the restricted topics from the survey (p<0.0001)

• Women were statistically more likely to be asked about age, parental status and intent for future children

• Men were more likely to be asked their opinions and rankings of other residency programs
• “I was asked by a program director if my husband and I had a stable relationship, because he ‘worries about female residents and doesn't want to deal with a break up.’ He also asked what negative things my ex-boyfriend would have to say about me.”

• “about my interest in having children in the future, which was then followed up with a short talk about how ‘women naturally have maternal urges’ with the conclusion being I will inevitably have children in the future.”

• Men reported being asked “about their opinion of other candidates (ie weaknesses of other applicants and with whom they would or would not want to match)”
Surveyed all 285 applicants to a single New York urology residency program in the 2017 Match cycle and obtained a response rate of 55% (n = 166)

- 58% of applicants received follow up communication from at least 1 program, the majority from multiple programs
  - 13% reported verbal communication
  - 19% felt misled by communication to believe they had a higher chance of matching at a program

- 85% of applicants reported being asked illegal questions regarding personal life, rank list and/or other interviews

- Female applicants reported being asked illegal questions significantly more frequently than male applicants (p<0.1)

**Table 2. Incidence and types of postinterview communication reported by survey respondents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of postinterview communication received</th>
<th>N = 96 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Response to a “Thank You” note or generic “Thank You for Interviewing” note</td>
<td>86 (89.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail from PD, chair, or other faculty member expressing interest in applicant</td>
<td>67 (69.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone call from PD, chair, or other faculty member expressing interest in applicant</td>
<td>12 (12.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter from PD, chair, or other faculty member expressing interest in applicant</td>
<td>7 (7.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3 (3.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;5 programs</td>
<td>48 (50.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 or more but &lt;10 programs</td>
<td>19 (19.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 or more programs</td>
<td>15 (15.6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3. Information regarding second-look visits reported by survey respondents who attended at least 1 second-look visit**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of second-look visits attended by a single applicant</th>
<th>N = 50 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>26 (52.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>13 (26.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2 (4.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for attending a second-look visit at a particular program</th>
<th>N = 50 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applicants’ interest in program</td>
<td>38 (76.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicant reported feeling obligated to do so in order to match at a particular program based on communication during or after interview day</td>
<td>22 (44.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicant was otherwise in the area</td>
<td>2 (4.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3 (6.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favorably; ranked the program higher</td>
<td>30 (60.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfavorably; ranked the program lower</td>
<td>8 (16.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit did not affect ranking</td>
<td>9 (18.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical activities or operative experience</td>
<td>8 (16.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time spent with current residents</td>
<td>24 (48.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time spent with PD, chair, or other faculty member</td>
<td>8 (16.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of 138 surveys sent, 84 were completed for a 61% response rate.

- 26% of programs explicitly announced to the applicants that they did not want to be contacted after the interview.
- 98% percent of programs received post-interview communication from applicants.
- 81% of PDs responded that promises by applicants did not influence their rank list.
- 38% of programs “failed to match” an applicant who made an informal post interview communication or commitment (e.g. I plan to rank you as top choice).

Take Home Message
Although commonplace, applicant post interview communication is NOT highly valued by PDs.
What do Program Directors think of second looks?

Take Home Message
2nd look is limited in utility except for applicants seeing “day-to-day”

- **95% of PDs** reported that they **did not encourage** a 2nd look
- **52% of PDs** state that **participating in a second look does not have the potential to influence** an applicant’s rank order

Elsamara S. The Urology Match Process and the Value of Post-Interview Communication for Program Directors. Accepted submission to Urology 2018
Summary

A number of single institution surveys across the country with average response rate of 50% report post interview communication or inappropriate interview questions occurring at a rate of 13 – 85%.

Applicants are vulnerable to perceived requests for post interview communication.

Significant bias is seen in interview questions.
The use of second look interviews in preparation for the plastic surgery residency match is prohibited.

There will be NO communication between faculty and applicants after the interview except for faculty communicating with their own advisees.

There can be no unsolicited contact from anyone in the program to the applicant except the coordinator needing missing information for the application.

Contact with the residents in a program can only be initiated by the applicant.

The content of the communication can under no circumstances address the applicant's desirability by the program, their ranking, etc.

The Program Director is responsible for disseminating this Policy within the Program. Regarding non-compliance:

- Violations will be validated by the ACAPS Executive Committee, followed by forwarding of all validated violations to the RRC for investigation and possible citations.
- All validated violations will be announced at the next ACAPS meeting.

Policy passed and implemented by ACAPS membership December 2012
Post interview
Communication
   Telephone
   email
   letter

Reveal/disclose applicant's rank intentions, programs or locations applied to

Ask illegal questions during interviews

Require second visits

Current State of Affairs

Recommendations

AUA Match Guidelines

NRMP Code of Conduct

NRMP Code of Conduct

NRMP Code of Conduct

AUA Match Guidelines

?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Define</th>
<th>Adequately define match violations, assess the existing NRMP policies and procedures on Match Violations and investigations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Propose and recommend</td>
<td>Propose and recommend guidelines for the AUA/SAU Match regarding Match Violations including consequences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effect</td>
<td>Effect change at the level of the AUA and SAU that more effectively mitigates future violations, intentional or not</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# AUA vs NRMP: Policy and Procedure for Match Violations, Investigations and Consequence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Violations Policy</th>
<th>AUA</th>
<th>NRMP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| Confidentiality | None | Can be done anonymously, however, this could impede the NRMP’s ability to investigate the alleged violation. *Can request for identity to remain confidential. |

| Timing | None | NRMP to acknowledge written reports within 7 days of the receipt of the report. |

## Disposition/Consequence of violations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If applicant violation was committed</th>
<th>AUA</th>
<th>NRMP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>NRMP may withdraw any applicant or program from residency match if the NRMP believes it has credible evidence that the applicant or program has violated the terms of this Agreement.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| If program violation was committed | None | *NRMP final report will be delivered to program director, institution, chair of GME, ACGME, specialty program director association, NRMP executive committee, party who originally reported violation. |

| Consequence | None | *May be barred from NRMP match and/or identified as Match Violator for 1-3 years or permanently. |

| Consequence | None | *Identification of applicant/program/institution in R3 system as Match Violator. |

Anonymous Portal Reporting Form

Appendix 6: Proposed Anonymous AUA/SAU Reporting Form

AUA/SAU Match Violation Report Form for Applicants

Date Submitted: __________________________
Program Name: ____________________________
Institution name: __________________________
Match and Year: ____________________________
Date of Incident: ____________________________

Please describe the alleged violation in detail and include the name of the person(s) whose actions are in question:

Please explain how you became aware of the alleged violation and describe your relationship with the person(s) whose actions are in question:

The following information is NOT required; however, failure to provide it may impede AUA/SAU’s ability to investigate the alleged violation.

Applicant Last Name: __________________________
Applicant First Name: _________________________
AUA ID: __________________________
Applicant Email: ____________________________
Applicant Telephone: _______________________

If you provided your name and contact information, is the AUA/SAU authorized to identify you as the person reporting the alleged violation or do you wish your identity to remain confidential?

_____ Can reveal my identity  ____ Want my identity to remain confidential
Proposed AUA Policy and Procedure for Match Violations

- Burdensome, excessively punitive
- Rejected it as a useful or feasible basis for replication for the AUA/SAU
- Presumption of guilt over innocence

SAU Committee of PDs representing each AUA Section

1) Written report from Chair of Investigation committee to PD and Chair
2) Written report to Program Director and Chair with request for action plan from program on self-assessment and methods to education and prevent recurrent violations
3) Reporting to AUA/SAU
1. Standardize Applicant Surveying into annual post match survey performed by AUA to collect National Data in ongoing fashion

2. Create Anonymous Portal for applicants or programs to report violations

3. Have both applicants and programs sign an electronic attestation to abide by the Match Guidelines

4. Violations investigated by Committee of Program Directors of each AUA Section
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Adequately define match violations, assess the existing NRMP policies and procedures on Match Violations and investigations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effect</td>
<td>Thoroughly examine the prevalence and type of urology match violations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effect</td>
<td>Propose and recommend guidelines for the AUA/SAU Match regarding Match Violations including consequences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effect</td>
<td>Effect change at the level of the AUA and SAU that more effectively mitigates future violations, intentional or not</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusions

• Medical students should not be asked to reveal their ranking preferences to programs

• They should not be coerced into changing their Match lists

• They should not be asked inappropriate questions during interviews

• They should not be “strongly encouraged” to conduct second looks
Final Thoughts

• **Provide Faculty Development** on their role in upholding ethical standards of conduct during the Match process

• **Analyze and Standardize your interview process** towards performance based interviewing to minimize bias (... and in your entire recruitment process)

• **Modeling professionalism** and ethical behavior advances our field and urology has an opportunity to be leaders

---

**7 Practical Ways to Reduce Bias in Your Hiring Process**

*by Rebecca Knight*
SAU Task Force
Proposed Solutions to Match Violations

• Maude Carmel, MD (UTSW/ TX, South Central Section)
• Kirsten Green, MD (UCSF/ CA, Western Section)
• Sammy Elsamra, MD (UMDNJ, New York Section)
• Stephanie Kielb, MD (Northwestern/IL, North Central Section)
• Kathleen Kiernan, MD (UWash/WA, Western Section)
• Jay Simhas, MD (Einstein Urology/ Temple/ PA, Mid Atlantic Section)
• Simone Thavaseelan, MD (Brown/RI; New England Section)
References


• Farber N, Neylan C, Kaplan A, Radadia K, Singer E, Elsamara S. The Urology Match and Post-Interview Communication”. *Urology*, Volume 122, 44-51, 2018


• Farber N, Neylan C, Kaplan A, Radadia K, Singer E, Elsamara S. The Urology Match Process and the Value of Post-Interview Communication for Program Directors. Accepted submission to Urology 2018.