The Cost of Success: Surveying the Costs of Applying to Pharmacy Residencies

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Background

- The demand for completing a pharmacy residency has grown exponentially over the years
Background

- National pharmacy organizations recommend pharmacists become residency trained by 2020\textsuperscript{1,2}
  
  - **American Society of Health Systems (ASHP) Vision:**
    - All entry level hospital pharmacist possess at least a postgraduate year-one (PGY1) residency\textsuperscript{1}
  
  - **American Clinical College of Pharmacy (ACCP) Position Statement:**
    - Pharmacy residency should be required as a prerequisite for direct patient care\textsuperscript{2}

- Available literature totalling the costs for applications and interviews for pharmacy residency positions is lacking and may be beneficial to provide information for future applicants
Objectives

Determine the cost candidates incur when applying to and interviewing with ASHP Accredited PGY1 Pharmacy Residency Programs
Methods

- **Study Design:** convenience sample survey for current 4th year pharmacy students
- **Created draft survey containing questions about costs**
- **Conducted delphi process to edit first draft of survey**
  - Current residents at UIHC gave feedback
  - Suggested edits were made
Methods

- Made final draft of survey using University of Iowa’s Qualtrics software
  - Basic information of pharmacy student
    - College of Pharmacy, regions within U.S. applying to, other post-graduate programs
  - How much money was spent on application fees
  - How much money was spent for interviews
    - Transportation, hotels, food, clothing,
  - Which, if any, conferences and showcases the student attended
    - ACCP, APhA, ASHP, NCPA
    - If any travel funds were given by the college of pharmacy (if so, how much)
  - If funds limited the student’s number of applications and/or interviews
Methods

- Emailed the finalized survey to six Midwest colleges of pharmacy who agreed to participate
- Four $50 electronic gift cards were offered and selected via random number generator to incentivize participation
- Interpreted the results
Results

Main cost factors

- PhORCAS Applications
- ASHP Midyear
- Interviews
Results

How many schools participate in the survey?
How many completed responses
Average number of applications?
Average number of interviews?
Funding restraints?
How many people attended ASHP Midyear and their cost?
Demographics

Demographics of Participants (N=124)

- Creighton University (Distance): 8.1%
- Creighton University (Omaha Campus): 6.5%
- Drake University: 11.3%
- NDSU: 23.4%
- SDSU: 27.4%
- University of Iowa: 12.9%
- University of Nebraska Medical Center: 10.5%
Where Students Applied (N=124)

- 99.19% West Coast
- 93.55% Midwest
- 37.55% South
- 19.35% East Coast
How many PGY1 ASHP accredited residency programs did you interview with VS Your Cost to Interview

\[ y = 0.0004x + 4.5617 \]

\[ R^2 = 0.0405 \]
Cost of Each Variable

- Air Travel: 426
- Transportation: 255
- Lodging: 319
- Food: 133
- Apparel: 149
- Other: 103
Discussion

- Study Limitations
  - This was a self-reported survey and recalled cost information may be estimates
  - Only 6 out of 9 targeted Midwest schools participated
    - schools that did not participate:
      - Concordia University- Wisconsin
      - UW Madison
      - University of Minnesota
  - Costs associated with Phase II of the Match process were not included
Discussion

- Cost accommodations, such as meals, are not provided by every residency program.
- Application fees are a limiting factor to the number of programs applicants apply to.
- Attending ASHP Midyear to explore residency programs is a major cost associated with obtaining a residency.
- Different regions to where applicants applied may explain large costs variations associated with interviews.
Discussion

Quotes from open-ended question of our survey:

1. Please provide any additional comments you have on the costs or financial obligations of applying to and interviewing with PGY1 ASHP accredited residency programs.

- “The financial burden of applying to residencies is similar to the iceberg and the titanic.”

- “When going to interviews, find the cheapest hotels and stay one night at most. Bring food from home for dinner and for the road when going back home so you don't have to buy food.”
Conclusion

- The average number of PGY1 pharmacy residency programs applicants applied to is 9, resulting in $312 spent per applicant for application fees on average.

- The average total dollar amount incurred to interview with pharmacy residency programs was $1268 per applicant.

- The results of this study highlight the financial burden that applicants incur when applying to PGY1 pharmacy residency programs and further research on this topic should be explored.
Questions
References
