

## 17 Emergency Medicine Residency Applicant Assessment of Competitiveness and Application Behavior

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**Background:** The average number of emergency medicine (EM) residency applications per student has increased 50% (from 32.2 to 48.2) over the past five years. There are many possible reasons for over application, including a lack of understanding of competitiveness by applicants.

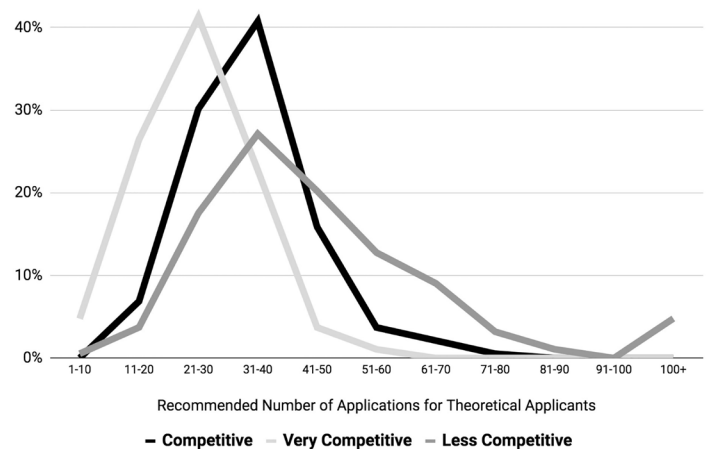
**Objectives:** The purpose of this study is to evaluate the recommended and actual application behaviors of competitive, less competitive, and very competitive EM residency applicants.

**Methods:** A maximum of 200 third and fourth year medical students attending EMRA's Medical Student Forum at the 2017 ACEP Scientific Assembly were invited to complete an IRB-approved survey using PollEverywhere. Students were asked how many applications theoretically competitive, very competitive, and less competitive applicants should submit, as well as asked to identify their self-perceived level of competitiveness and the number of applications that they would or have submitted.

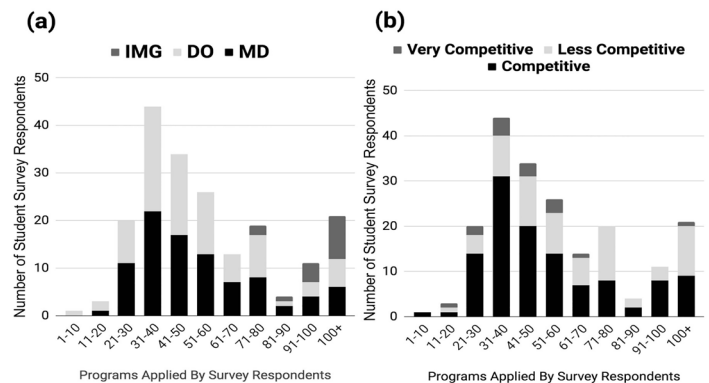
**Results:** Respondents were 56% MS4, 42% MS3, and 1.5% were medical school graduates; 47% were MD, 45% DO, and 8% US IMG. Between 94% and 100% of students responded to each question. Most students believed that theoretically very competitive applicants should apply to 21-30 programs and theoretically competitive applicants should apply to 31-40 programs. For theoretically less competitive

applicants, the most frequent response was also 31-40 programs however there was a much wider range of responses.

**Conclusions:** There appears to be strong agreement between students on the recommended application behaviors of competitive and very competitive applicants, with less agreement on the optimal application strategy for less competitive applicants. When comparing survey respondents' actual behavior with their recommended behaviors for theoretical applicants, it is clear that applicants are not following their own advice, with a number of applicants of all self-perceived competitiveness categories applying to for up to 100 programs or more. More research is necessary to determine why students do not personally follow the advice they would give others. A major limitation of this study is that student survey respondents were asked to assess their own level of competitiveness without collecting objective information to corroborate that their assessments are valid



**Figure 1.** The number of applications that students (by percentage of total respondents) recommend theoretical applicants submit when applying for emergency medicine residency programs (n = 188).



**Figure 2.** The number of applications that medical students applying to emergency medicine residency programs would or have submitted by (a) applicant type (n = 196) and (b) self-perceived competitiveness (n = 188).