Interviewing residents: Picking the best

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Disclosure Statement

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I do not have any relevant financial relationships with commercial entities.
With Appreciation to:

Janine C. Edwards, PhD, David Jones, PhD, Steve Case, PhD, Terry Stratton, PhD, Scott Cottrell, PhD, John, Molidor, PhD
Workshop Objectives

1. Explore interviewing practices and their advantages and limitations
2. Create situational interviewing questions, determine appropriate answers and evaluation methods
3. Discuss and demonstrate proper interviewing techniques
Why conduct personal interviews?

Walton, “Admissions Procedures to Medical Schools,” Medical Education, 1994
Interviewers’ faith in their judgments!

Walton, “Admissions Procedures to Medical Schools,” Medical Education, 1994
Why conduct personal interviews?

Applicants receive focused attention!!

Walton, “Admissions Procedures to Medical Schools,” Medical Education, 1994
Interviews........have serious problems of objectivity, reproducibility and validity.”

Glick, S.M. “Selection of Medical students: the Beer-Sheva Perspective,” Medical Education, 1994
Reliability of interview is influenced by:

- Interviewers tendencies (leniency, centrally, severity)
- Interviewer background
- Interviewer training
- First impressions, stereotyping, gender
- Halo effect
- Weighting of unfavorable information
- Contrast effect
- Lack of commitment to school mission
- Variable, non-objective rating scales

The Multiple Mini Interview
What is the MMI?

• Series of brief independent observations of the candidate
• Blueprinted against the goals of the institution and the profession
• Usually samples trait-based characteristics including communication, professionalism and problem solving skills
• Observers complete a rating scale
• Conditions are standardized; situations are standardized; rating forms are standardized
• Researchers identified improvements in: reliability of ratings, predictive validity

Eva, KW & Macala. Multiple mini-interview test characteristics: ’tis better to ask candidates to recall than to imagine. Medical Education, 2014;48:604-613.
MMI in Residency Settings

- Primarily used in Canada and internationally.
- A dilemma for dialogue
- MMI is innovative and unique
- Opportunity to express unique strengths

- Interviewer /rating fatigue
- Interviewer subjectivity
- Inability to form a meaningful connection with the interviewer
- Unable to learn about the interviewer, hospital or program


Interviews Need Improvement

“...problems in measurement most likely reflect differences among interviewers that can be attenuated through both interviewer training and modification of interview content”*

What content best addresses the qualities professional schools seek in their students?

Harasym, P.H. et al. “Reliability and Validity of Interviewers' Judgments of Medical School Candidates,” Academic Medicine, 1996
AAMC Core Competencies for Entering Medical Students

“…observable behavior that combines knowledge, skills, values and attitudes related to a specific activity” that students need to demonstrate in order to be successful in medical school

Developed after an extensive search of the medical education and employment literatures and input from several blue-ribbon and advisory panels

Endorsed by the AAMC Group on Student Affairs (GSA) and Committee on Admissions (COA)

From the AAMC Admissions Initiative
https://www.aamc.org/initiatives/admissionsinitiative/competencies/
Use critical incidents reflective of your desired competencies in periodontal residents

“Behavioral” or “Situational” Structured Interview Questions

Desired outcome in resident selection
Unstructured interviews
- conversational
- informal style
- no fixed format
- questions not specified in advance
- lack of objective scoring criteria

Structured interviews
- consistent, pre-designated questions
- quantitative criteria for scoring applicants’ responses

-Patrick, L.E. et al., “A Structured Interview for Medical School Admission, Phase 1: Initial Procedures and Results,” Academic Medicine, 2001
Improving Interview Structure

• **Question Consistency**
  - Ask the same question across candidates

Improving Interview Structure

• **Question Consistency**
  – Ask the same question across candidates

• **Question Sophistication**
  – Ask behavioral consistency or situational response questions

Behavioral Consistency Scenario

- Based on the premise that *past behavior is predictive of future behavior*

- Requires the applicant to respond to inquiries concerning *prior responsibilities, duties, accomplishments*, etc.
Think about a time....
Behavioral Consistency Scenario

- Describe a time when you had to work with someone you either lost respect for, or disliked...

Guiding questions:
1. How did you handle the situation?
2. Did you learn anything about professionalism in that situation?
3. Was it difficult to set your feelings aside and do the work?
4. What is your relationship with the person now?
Situational Response Scenario

- Based on the premise that *intentions predict behaviors*
- Requires the applicant to indicate what he/she *would do* in dealing with potential situations posed by the interviewer
What would you do if...
One day, a classmate gives you a sheet containing questions for an upcoming exam.

Guiding questions:
1. How would you handle the situation?
2. What issues would you consider important in coming to a decision about what to do?
3. If you were failing the course, would it affect your decision to use the questions to study?
4. When would it be OK to use the questions to study?
1. Identify a competency for your group
The Challenge

1. Identify a competency for your group
2. Write a scenario that addresses the competency (either behavioral consistency or situational response)
The Challenge

1. Identify a competency for your group
2. Write a scenario that addresses the competency (either behavioral consistency or situational response)
3. Develop three guiding questions
Rubric: a scoring guideline that systematically measures performance for a defined population (e.g. residency candidates)
Creating a Interview Rubric

- Develop scenario (behavioral consistency or situational judgment)
- Determine key criteria
- Decide which criteria to evaluate
- Define performance indicators
- Identify standards of performance
- Decide on scoring scale
- Review rubric to ensure it measures what you intend

Dickens LD, Zimmaro D, Kucsera J. Developing and applying tools: Rubrics and exam questions. Division of Instructional Innovation and Assessment. University of Texas at Austin (2005).
Elements of a Rubric

• Define what the applicant needs to do or say
  Specify descriptors and criteria that identify performance expectation for each point on a scale

• Measure how well the applicant does it
  Specify standards that identify the range of quality or level of performance

• Assign a score to applicant’s performance
  Specify a scale of points for discrete elements of applicant’s performance

Dickens LD, Zimmaro D, Kucsera J. *Developing and applying tools: Rubrics and exam questions*. Division of Instructional Innovation and Assessment, University of Texas at Austin (2005).
## Scoring Rubric

Example of a key criterion and its performance indicators for personal attributes: *a descriptively anchored scale*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Non-Judgmental</th>
<th>Judgmental</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respectful of Others’ Beliefs</td>
<td>10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Trustworthy</td>
<td>10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altruistic</td>
<td>10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepting of Feedback</td>
<td>10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0</td>
<td>Disrespectful of Others’ Beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Untrustworthy</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Selfish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Resistant to Feedback</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Challenge

1. Identify a competency for your group
2. Write a scenario that addresses the competency (either behavioral consistency or situational response)
3. Develop three guiding questions
4. Create a descriptively anchored rating instrument
1. Identify a critical incident for your group
2. Write a scenario that addresses the competency (either behavioral consistency or situational response)
3. Develop three guiding questions
4. Create a descriptively anchored rating instrument
5. Share
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Skills (Verbal and Non-Verbal)</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>Rambling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Articulate</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Outgoing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comfortable</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Confident</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Easy Conversationalist</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Awkward</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hesitant</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nervous</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The scope of this criterion covers some or all of the following:
- Demonstrated enthusiasm for a career in general practice, with a strong sense of service to care for others
- Active participation in professional activities
- Commitment to primary health, awareness of public health problems and health needs of special groups, and population-based preventative strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unsuitable/does not meet criterion</th>
<th>Very limited capacity to meet criterion</th>
<th>Somewhat limited capacity to meet criterion</th>
<th>Meets criterion</th>
<th>Exceeds criterion</th>
<th>Meets criterion to a high degree</th>
<th>Meets criterion to a superior degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Somewhat apathetic attitude towards a career in general practice; little evidence of sense of service to care for others</td>
<td>• Generally displays interest and eagerness for a career in general practice; usually displays sense of service to care for others. Participates, or shows a willingness to participate in professional activities. Generally aware of public health problems and health needs of special groups. Reasonable level of knowledge of population-based preventative strategies</td>
<td>• Displays genuine enthusiasm for a career in general practice with a very strong sense of service to care for others. Actively participates in a wide range of professional activities. Highly committed to public health and extremely aware of public health problems and health needs of special groups. Extensive knowledge of population-based preventative strategies</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Guidance for interviewers for assigning marks in the MMI using a behaviourally anchored rating scale for a question of “Why do you want to be a GP”.
Tips for Interviewers
Purpose of Interviews

• Information gathering
• Verification of application data
• Decision making
• Recruitment

Preparing for the interview

- Allow open file interviews
- 30-45 minutes
- Conversational
- Put applicant at ease
- Draw out the quiet student
Questioning Techniques

- Have questions prepared that you will ask all applicants
- Don’t string too many questions together at once
- Layer questions
- Keep candidate on track
- Use silence
- Don’t show signs of agreement or disagreement
- Be kind

Examples of Layered/Probing Questions

- How did this situation arise?
- Where did the problem originate?
- Who was responsible?
- What would you do? Why would you take that action?
- What alternative tack would you take if your initial plans do not work?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages in each of your approaches?

Common Interview Questions for Residents

• Tell me about yourself.
• Why are you pursuing this specialty?
• Where do you see yourself in 3-5 years?
• What are your greatest strengths?
• Tell me about your weaknesses.

• Why should we choose you over other candidates?
• Why are you interested in this program (this region)?
• Tell me about something on your CV.
• What interests do you have outside of the dental profession?
• What questions do you have for me?
Caution: Don’t Ask-Don’t Tell
Tips for Interviewers

• Be professional in all interactions with the candidate
• Do not ask marital status, religious preference, or age of candidate
• Do not ask questions requiring a judgment of opinion regarding highly controversial ethical or moral issues
• Do not reveal contents of letters of evaluation to the candidate
• Do not prejudge selection decision and discuss with candidate
Caution: Don’t Ask-Don’t Tell
Tips for Interviewers

• Do not dismiss any dental school undergraduate or residency program
• Do not tell other interviewers your opinion of the candidate prior to their interview, or prior to their writing their comments
• Do not discuss the candidate’s status with his or her parents, friends, or interested parties
• When in doubt, call the residency director’s office!
Pitfalls for Selecting the “Right” Resident

- Poor analysis of work functions in job analysis
- Poor analysis of necessary personality-skill profile in job analysis
- Inadequate initial screening
- Inadequate interviewing techniques
- Inadequate questioning techniques
- References were not checked