



Solutions to Common Obstacles IMGs Encounter

Background

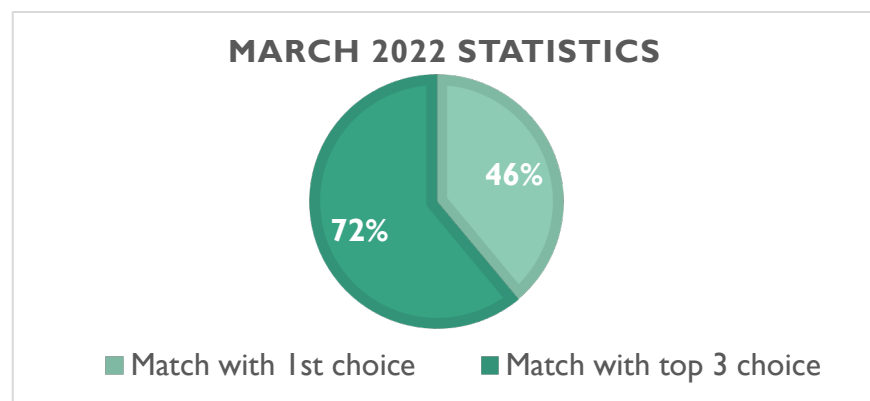
Applying for residency in the US can be challenging. In order to pursue a career in the US, the candidate must first pass the USMLE exams. These results are crucial for matching.

Average USMLE scores of residents that matched for Step 1 was 222 and for Step 2 was 233 (1)

Percentage of non-US IMGs matched is 57%. (2)

Highest matched specialty for non-US IMGs is internal medicine.

Figure 1 is a graph showing the number of IMGs that matched into the respective specialties



46% match with their first choice

72% match with their top 3 choices

This poster highlights the common obstacles IMGs face when applying for residency in the US and provides a solution to counter them.

7th September 2022

ERAS Applications
Open

31st January 2023

NRMP Deadline

13th March 2023

Match Week

NRMP Registration Open

15th September 2022

Ranking Opens

1st February 2023

Match Result Release

17th March 2023

Obstacles

Step 1

It is common for candidates to score low or have multiple repeats. To solve this, candidates should strive to achieve high scores in Step 2. Specialties requiring high scores have less desired outcomes. Overall, low scores need to be explained well and a justifiable reason can help mitigate its effect.

Gap Years

Ideally candidates should apply to residency programs within the first three years of graduation. Medical training should be sought during the gap year; research, electives, externships, observership or volunteering.

Letters of Recommendation

Some institutions require candidates to have inpatient experiences mentioned in their electives, these electives need to be booked in advance. The LORs are preferred to be from a US organization. Academic letterheads are favourable to regular clinic letters. Candidates should secure a minimum of three LORs from the specialty they are applying to.

Visa

Candidates must ensure that their visa status is consistent with their preferred specialty program. There are programs that are known to sponsor visas, those are likely to result in a match. Among those specialties are internal medicine and family medicine. (3)

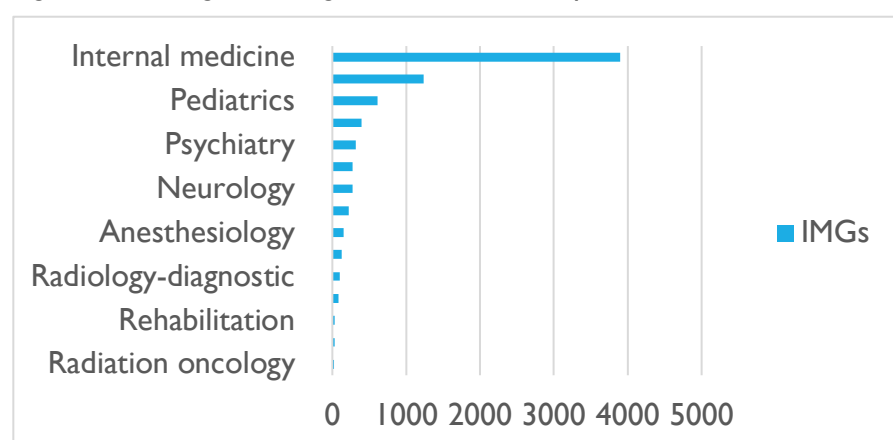
Competition

Candidates need to ensure that their application stands out from the rest of the applicants. This could be done by attempting Step 3 exam.

Table 1 showing no. of IMGs that matched in range of states

State	IMGs
Tennessee	69
Mississippi	75
Arizona	80
Minnesota	91
Connecticut	203
Massachusetts	236
Illinois	338
California	407
Texas	453
New Jersey	488
Pennsylvania	534
Florida	573
New York	1473

Figure 2 showing Matching Statistics with the specialties of choice



Another distinguishing feature is to have research in the specialty of choice. Some candidates seek a master's degree. Multiple electives in the specialty of choice are also another admirable quality. Achieving fluency in English is of great benefit. (4)

Conclusion

As IMGs obstacles are common and to be able to neutralize them, the candidate needs to approach them strategically.

Ways to achieve a good portfolio include adequate USMLE scores, no unexplained gap years, at least 3 LORs and proper choice of specialty programs.

Ways to stand out include completing STEP 3, electives, research, masters and being fluent in English.

Good preparation and confidence should eliminate all weaknesses in the portfolio.

References

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