THE OTOLARYNGOLOGY SIGNALING EXPERIENCE

Official #ENTSignaling program for applicants

Developed by
Otolaryngology Program Directors Organization (OPDO)
Society of University Otolaryngologists (SUO)
Association of Academic Departments in Otolaryngology (AADO)
The Problem
Application “arms race”
More Applicants + More Difficulty in Distinguishing Applicants

- Academic
  - Schools moving to Pass/Fail grading systems
  - Fewer Schools with AOA
  - Not reporting class rank

- Pandemic Challenges
  - Loss of Visiting Rotations
  - Concern for Interview Hoarding

- If applicants are applying to every program in the country, how do we know who’s really interested in us?
Traditional signals

• Hints from the application
• Visiting rotations
• Perceived geographic preferences
• Physician advocacy
• Applicant advocacy
• Equity in Advocacy?
History of Otolaryngology Application “Innovations”

- Program-specific paragraph
  - Implemented in 2016
  - Late introduction, burden on applicants without clear benefit
  - Not embraced by GME community

- Otolaryngology Resident Talent Assessment (ORTA)
  - Aims to measure the non-cognitive aspects of individual’s success
  - Automated phone interview with third-party scoring/interpretation
  - Implemented in 2017, made post-match & voluntary in 2018/19, abandoned in 2021
A Novel Approach to the National Resident Matching Program—The Star System

A Computer Simulation Model to Analyze the Application Process for Competitive Residency Programs

Not the Last Word: Want to Match in an Orthopaedic Surgery Residency? Send a Rose to the Program Director
The Job Market for New Economists: A Market Design Perspective

Peter Coles, John Cawley, Phillip B. Levine, Muriel Niederle, Alvin E. Roth, and John J. Siegfried

Journal of Economic Perspectives—Volume 24, Number 4—Fall 2010—Pages 187–206
Goals of Signaling

• Provide applicants with special attention at programs of particular interest
• Remove inappropriate perception of disinterest
  • Geography bias
• Improve efficiency of the interview process
• Improve distribution of interviews
Goal: to put interested applicants with interested programs

“Brought to you by the AEA”

Applicant friendly
Signaling Program Design

- 5 Signals per applicant
- All signals with equal weight
- Programs only see list of applicants that have sent them signals
- No signaling to home program or program with in-person clinical rotation (visiting SubI)
  - Interest assumed in these scenarios
  - Avoid conflict with home institution
- Opt-out option for Programs, optional for applicants
Welcome to the otolaryngology interview preference signaling program. This is the official preference signaling program developed by academic otolaryngology organizations:

- Otolaryngology Program Directors Organization (OPDO)
- Society of University Otolaryngologists (SOU)
- Association of Academic Departments in Otolaryngology (AADO)

Development input was also done in conjunction with key stakeholder organizations:

- Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC)
  - Group on Student Affairs (GSA) the Committee on Student Affairs (COSA)
  - Electronic Residency Application Service (ERAS)
- National Resident Matching Program (NRMP)

This process is completely voluntary for applicants. We hope applicants will find the program useful to facilitate putting interested applicant with interested programs. If there are any questions, please feel free to inquire using the “contact us” link. Explore this website for more information about the process.
Program Code of Conduct:

• Programs shall NOT disclose identification of applicants who have signaled.
• Programs shall NOT ask interviewees where they have signaled.
• Programs shall NOT disclose the number of signals they have received
Signaling Messages

• Lack of a Signal is not a Signal
• Signals should be used for making interview decisions, NOT making rank list decisions
• Programs should not overvalue signals – do not completely substitute applicant preference for program preference
• Applicants should target programs at which they will be competitive
Signaling Implementation Process – Stakeholder Engagement

• Groundswell of support – Prior OPDO Chairs and PD colleagues
• Approval from the “Boss” – AADO meetings
  • Discussion of legal and practical impacts of implementation
• Development of signaling process and rules
• Student focus groups and forums
• AAMC, NRMP, ERAS engagement and approval
• GME Community – Med School Deans
OTOMATCH2021

632 applicants
559 applicants in Match
454 US MD Srs in Match
350 positions
0 unfilled

ENTSIGNaling2021

• 632 applicants
• 558 sent signals
• 100% program participation
Goals of Signaling

- Provide applicants with special attention at programs of particular interest
- Remove inappropriate perception of disinterest
  - Geography bias
- Improve efficiency of the interview process
- Improve distribution of interviews
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>STRONGLY DISAGREE</th>
<th>DISAGREE</th>
<th>NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE</th>
<th>AGREE</th>
<th>STRONGLY AGREE</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Signaling allows applicants to be noticed by the programs in which they have the most interest.</td>
<td>2.16%</td>
<td>6.90%</td>
<td>12.07%</td>
<td>51.29%</td>
<td>27.59%</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signaling prevents programs from dismissing applicants due to a lack of perceived interest.</td>
<td>5.17%</td>
<td>8.19%</td>
<td>19.83%</td>
<td>40.09%</td>
<td>26.72%</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signaling promotes a more even distribution of interview offers to residency applicants.</td>
<td>6.90%</td>
<td>16.81%</td>
<td>46.98%</td>
<td>18.97%</td>
<td>10.34%</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signaling improves the efficiency of the application process</td>
<td>6.90%</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
<td>28.02%</td>
<td>35.78%</td>
<td>16.81%</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signaling is an equitable/fair process.</td>
<td>4.31%</td>
<td>6.03%</td>
<td>20.26%</td>
<td>44.83%</td>
<td>24.57%</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signaling lessened the anxiety of the application/interview process for me.</td>
<td>22.84%</td>
<td>25.86%</td>
<td>22.84%</td>
<td>19.40%</td>
<td>9.05%</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signaling benefits programs.</td>
<td>1.29%</td>
<td>3.02%</td>
<td>15.09%</td>
<td>45.26%</td>
<td>35.34%</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signaling benefits applicants.</td>
<td>5.60%</td>
<td>6.90%</td>
<td>24.57%</td>
<td>41.38%</td>
<td>21.55%</td>
<td>232</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall, I was satisfied with signaling.</td>
<td>3.88%</td>
<td>5.17%</td>
<td>19.83%</td>
<td>47.41%</td>
<td>23.71%</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPLICANT: Overall, I was satisfied with signaling (pre-interview survey)

APPLICANT: Overall, I was satisfied with signaling (post-interview survey)
Program Directors Applicants
Continue with Signaling Next Year?

Yes
No

Program Directors
Applicants

Yes
No
How Did Programs Use Signals?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As a screening tool, before application review</td>
<td>26.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incorporated into initial application review/algorithm</td>
<td>52.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview invitation sent to every applicant that signaled.</td>
<td>4.35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Signal required for interview invitation</td>
<td>1.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a tie breaker for interview list</td>
<td>46.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used after interviews to develop rank list</td>
<td>15.94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not use them</td>
<td>4.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>8.70%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Impact of Signals? (n=234)

- 93% of applicants received an interview offer from at least one program they signaled.
- 34 (15%) applicants received interviews at all 5 programs to which they signaled
  - Only 9 (26%) received interviews at the 6th program they would have, but were unable to, signal
- 57 (25%) applicants received interviews at 4 of 5 signaled programs
  - Only 16 (28%) received interviews at the hypothetical 6th program
Comments

• Great! Thanks! Love it!
• Don’t know how programs use signals, if at all. There is no transparency; there is no uniform use of signals
• Worried about not getting an interview from un-signaled programs
• Too few, too many signals
• This is sham reform. Gaming of system. Benefits programs only.
• Would rather see application cap
• Would like to see an interview cap
Future of Signaling

- Ideal Number of Signals
- Application or Interview Cap? In addition to or as a substitute?
- How can we better provide applicants with information to make signaling decisions?
  - Understanding competitiveness of your application
  - Learning about program culture, academics, clinical experience
  - Information about how Programs use Signals
- Incorporation into the formal application process?