

# USE OF THE GROUP INTERVIEW FOR EVALUATION OF RESIDENCY CANDIDATES

Ashish Parikh, MD,  
Associate Program Director  
Sunil Sapru, MD,  
Assistant Program Director  
Anthony Carlino, MD,  
Assistant Program Director  
Kesha Holley-Whitaker, BA,  
Program Coordinator  
Richard S. Panush, MD,  
Chair and Program Director

Department of Medicine  
Saint Barnabas Medical Center  
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## OBJECTIVE

To introduce the group  
interview as an alternative to  
the traditional individual  
interviews for the selection  
of internal medicine  
residents



## EDUCATIONAL GOALS

- The role of the interview in resident selection and program “marketing”
- Concept of and literature about group interviews
- Advantages and disadvantages of the “traditional” individual interviews
- Style, format, mechanics, techniques of group interviews
- Our (limited) experience with group interviews
- Conclusions: Advantages and disadvantages of group interviews



## DOES INTERVIEWING REALLY MATTER?

- Poor correlations between predictors and performance during dental residency
  - academic achievement ( $r = 0.347$ ) \*
  - personal interview ( $r = 0.206$ )\*
  - letters of recommendation ( $r = 0.192$ )\*

– *J Dent Educ* 1983; 47:155-159

\*  $P < 0.05$



## DOES INTERVIEWING REALLY MATTER?

- ENT post-residency success was strongly predicted by having an exceptional trait and AOA membership.
- Success during residency was predicted by interviewer's impression of the candidate and a USMLE I scores higher than 570.

– *J Am Coll Surg* 2006; 202:649–654.



## DATA ON GROUP INTERVIEWING

- No data in medical literature on group interviewing
- No scientific data in non-medical literature
- Large body of work examining the “situational interview” from other industries



## NON-MEDICAL GROUP INTERVIEWS

- “They often let their guards down ... revealing their genuine inclinations.”
- Interviewer “pays much closer attention to what the other applicants are doing while that one person is speaking”

– Orton Varona, Team Leader for Technical Recruiting, Southwest Airlines



## SITUATIONAL INTERVIEWS

- H-P uses Situational Interviews to assess applicant fit to job and organizational requirements
- “The main question is not, ‘Does this person have the necessary specific skills?’ but, ‘Will this person fit our culture?’”

– Robert Packard of Hewlett-Packard (H-P)



## SITUATIONAL INTERVIEWS

- Specific set of situational scripts can provide consistency across interviewers (i.e., inter-rater reliability).
- This consistency helps avoid decision-making problems caused by unstructured questioning methods typical of a conventional interview
- Addresses reports by applicant focus groups that conventional interviewers often seem to be disorganized, ill-prepared, or "shooting from the hip."

– Latham and Saari, 1984



## SITUATIONAL INTERVIEWS

- Generate better predictions of job performance
- Interviewers are less likely to be affected by gender or racial bias in making fit assessments.

– *Personnel Psychology* 1997; 50:655–702



## INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS (SBMC PERSPECTIVE)

- Time intensive
- Labor Intensive
- Tedious
- Boring
- Limited information about candidate revealed with traditional questions/setting
- Intra/inter-interviewer bias
- Preplanned/prepared/scripted/stereotypic answers
- Is there a (better) alternative?



## ALTERNATIVES

- Stop using interviews as a method to evaluate candidates (little evidence that it has a high predictive value)
- Use group interviews



## OUR GROUP INTERVIEW

- 1 to 2 faculty members
- 4 to 8 interviewees
- Around conference table
- Faculty sat apart to improve interaction
- Effort made to dissipate tension prior to formally starting
- Educational/informative
- Used humor
- Lasted 90-120 minutes, followed by 5-10 min individual interview



## ICEBREAKERS

- Introductions
- Background
- Personal goals
- Professional goals



## PERSONALITY TRAITS

- Favorite movie, author, work of art, trip, restaurant?
- What was the last (favorite, best, worst) book you read (movie, work of art)?
- Your hero, role model?
- Who would you like to have dinner with (living or dead) and why?
- What would you do if you were not a physician?
- Different question to each interviewee



## TRUE SITUATIONS

- True behaviors from past situations
- Tell me about a time when you:
  - Were intimidated / yelled at
  - Felt overwhelmed
  - Succeeded at a difficult task
  - Failed
  - Displayed teamwork
  - Displayed leadership
  - Displayed coping skills



## HYPOTHETICAL SITUATIONS

- How would you handle a patient who refused recommended therapy?
- How would you respond to an abusive attending?
- What would you tell a resident who asked you to do something you did not agree with?



## PATIENT SIMULATIONS

- Ask one interviewee to be the patient, the others are the physicians (diagnosis picked at random from text by the 'patient')
- Interviewer simulates a patient
- Others must work together to come up with the diagnosis
- Reveals knowledge and people skills



## ROLE PLAYING

- Chief resident vs difficult intern
- Patient demanding MRI vs PMD
- Patient requesting narcotics
- Discussing advance directives with family
- Precepting a medical student
- Medical error
- Disagreement
- Unprofessional/ethical behavior
- Changing calls



## DATA: SBMC EXPERIENCE

- Anonymous survey completed by all interviewees and interviewers
- Answers were on 0 to 100 scale
  - 0 = worst possible response
  - 100 = best possible response



## APPLICANT SURVEY. SUMMARY

- Although group interviews were rated slightly lower than individual interviews, they were viewed positively by most candidates
- Most candidates preferred having both a group and individual interview



## CANDIDATE SURVEY

- The interview was interesting.
- The interview was fun.
- The interview was educational.
- The interview was informative.
- The interview was stressful.
- The interview increased my interest in the program.
- The interview will influence my ranking of this program.
- I would interview this way again.
- The interview provided adequate opportunity to interact with faculty.
- The interview provided me adequate opportunity to “present” myself.
- Compare the SBMC interview process to others you have experienced.



## REPRESENTATIVE COMMENTS (POSITIVE)

- “I admire the way the interview goes-- no stress, have fun, and just be yourself”
- “This was fun!”
- “It was a pleasure to be a part of the interview”
- “The group interview gave me an idea of the supportive and collaborative environment in this program”
- “Seems like a good way to see how applicants interact in a team”



## REPRESENTATIVE COMMENTS (POSITIVE)

- “The case allows us to interact with each other”
- “At first it was stressful, but ended up being fun”
- “The most enjoyable interview I have had”



## REPRESENTATIVE COMMENTS (NEGATIVE)

- “Decrease the number of candidates in each group to 3-4”
- “Individual interviews provide more of an opportunity to present my credentials”
- “Need both group and individual interview”



## REPRESENTATIVE COMMENTS (NEGATIVE)

- “I believe the group interviews are advantageous for the interviews but not the interviewees.”
- “Take away group interviews”
- “I still don’t get it... Good luck with your trials!!!”



## CANDIDATE SURVEY

<u>QUESTION</u>	<u>GROUP</u>	<u>INDIVIDUAL</u>
Interesting	85.1	90.1
Fun	80.3	86.8
Educational	72.8	80.1
Informative	71.3	78.2
Stressful	35.5	27.7
Increased interest in program	73.8	81.5

There were no statistically significant differences between groups for any of these responses.

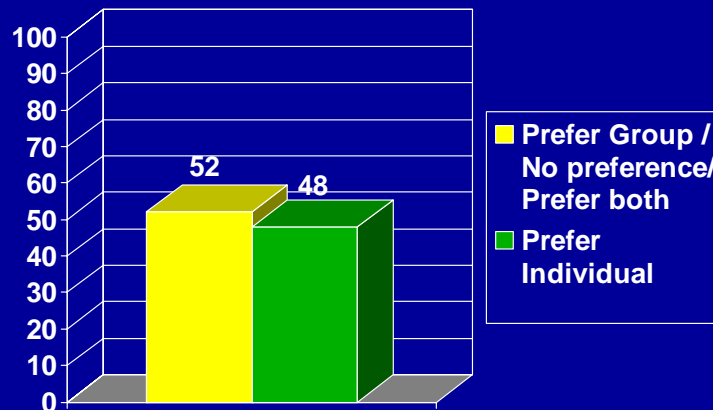


## CANDIDATE SURVEY

<u>QUESTION</u>	<u>GROUP</u>	<u>INDIVIDUAL</u>
Will influence ranking	73.2	85.0
Would do it again	70.3	98.5
Faculty Interaction	75.3	85.6
Opportunity to present oneself	68.8	80.9
Compare to other interviews	68.7	75.8



## INTERVIEWEE PREFERENCE

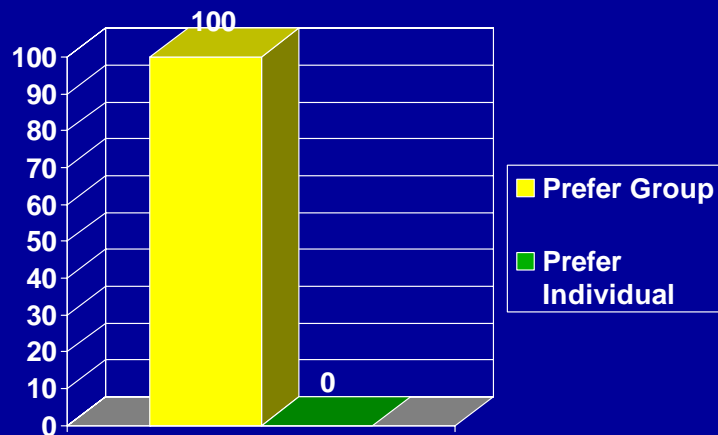


## FACULTY SURVEY

- The faculty universally viewed group interviews more favorably on all questions.



## FACULTY PREFERENCE



## FACULTY SURVEY

<u>QUESTION</u>	<u>GROUP</u>	<u>INDIVIDUAL</u>
Interesting	90.0	55.0
Fun	84.0	52.5
Educational	76.0	40.0
Informative	70.0	55.0
Stressful	42.0	23.0
Increased interest in candidate	65.0	60.0



## FACULTY SURVEY

<u>QUESTION</u>	<u>GROUP</u>	<u>INDIVIDUAL</u>
Will influence ranking	74.0	71.0
Would do it again	84.0	55.0
Faculty Interaction	67.0	75.0
Opportunity to present oneself	72.0	80.0
Compare to other interviews	70.0	50.0



## GROUP INTERVIEWS: WHAT WORKS

- **Reveal resident behaviors in specific situations (past and future)**
- **Interpersonal/interactive skills**
- **Group dynamics**
- **Medical knowledge**
- **Ability to work in a team**



## **GROUP INTERVIEWS: WHAT WORKS**

- **More time efficient**
- **PD/APD(s) may be able to meet all candidates this way**
- **Keeps the process fun**
- **More objectively compare candidates?**
- **May help candidate remember your program**



## **GROUP INTERVIEWS : WHAT DOES NOT WORK**

- **May be viewed as impersonal**
- **Need skill at controlling the conversation**
- **Introverted and overly aggressive/assertive candidates**



## CONCLUSIONS

- **Group interviews may better reveal certain behaviors, interpersonal skills, team play, and other qualities of interest to us.**
- **Our limited data suggests that faculty prefer group interviews and that candidates found them comparable to individual interviews.**
- **Group interviews and individual interviews can be used in a complementary fashion and need not be mutually exclusive.**



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **The individual interview process is quite time consuming, and can be variable, tedious, boring, unrevealing.**
- **We explored group interviews as a more efficient use of the interviewer's time, and a more challenging, novel, and informative alternative.**
- **Group interviews require a different set of skills from that required for an individual interview.**
- **Candidates may enjoy learning about the other candidates and seeing how others answer questions.**
- **If several faculty members are present, their different styles of questioning may help bring out different personality traits of the candidates.**
- **Group interviews may better reveal certain behaviors, interpersonal skills, team play, and other qualities of interest to us.**
- **Our faculty easily preferred group to individual interviews and plan to reprise (and improve) this approach**
- **Our (limited) data suggest that candidates responses to group and individual interviews were comparably favorable, with an insignificant and trivial quantitative preference for individual interviews.**
- **Group interviews and individual interviews can be used in a complementary fashion and need not be mutually exclusive.**

