

Social networking info will increasingly influence med student and trainee doctor selection

November 7 2012

The use of social networking sites is set to increasingly influence the selection of medical students and trainee doctors in the US, suggests the largest study of its kind published online in *Postgraduate Medical Journal*.

The authors base their findings on the responses of 600 staff involved in admissions procedures for medical schools and residency programs (for trainee doctors) in the US. Most respondents were either program directors or residency coordinators.

Forty six respondents (8%) were involved in [medical school](#) applications only; 511 (85%) were involved in reviewing residency program applications; and 43 (7%) were involved in both.

One in seven (15%) of the med schools and residency programs maintained a profile on a social networking site. And half of the respondents said they themselves had a social networking profile on [Facebook](#) (97%), LinkedIn (22%), or [Twitter](#) (13%).

Almost two out of three respondents said they were somewhat or very familiar with researching individuals on [social networking sites](#).

While only around one in 10 (9%) admitted to using social networking sites to evaluate applicants, around one in five (19%) said they used

some type of [internet search](#) to pick up information on applicants.

Only around one in seven (15%) schools/programs said they plan to use the web/social networking sites to search out information on candidates in future, but 29% were neutral on the issue, prompting the authors to suggest that the use of this method could therefore increase in the future.

This was further backed up by the finding that around one in five (20-23%) agreed that admissions programmes should use the internet and/or social networking sites to gather additional information not included in the application form, while a further 40% remained neutral on the issue.

A significant proportion (58%) also disagreed or strongly disagreed that it was a violation of privacy to search for an applicant's name on social networking sites.

Furthermore, over half (53%) agreed that online professionalism should be a factor in the selection process and that "unprofessional behaviour" evinced from wall posts/comments, photos, and group memberships should compromise an applicant.

But only a small proportion (3-4%) said they used the information they found to reject a candidate.

"Social networking sites will inevitably affect future selection of doctors and residents," conclude the authors. "Formal guidelines for professional behaviour on social networking sites might help applicants avoid unforeseen bias in the selection process," they add.

More information: Influence of social networking websites on medical school and residency selection process, Online First, [doi: 10.1136/postgradmedj-2012-131283](https://doi.org/10.1136/postgradmedj-2012-131283)

Provided by British Medical Journal

Citation: Social networking info will increasingly influence med student and trainee doctor selection (2012, November 7) retrieved 27 April 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2012-11-social-networking-info-increasingly-med.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.