

Increasing Medical Student Exposure and Participation in Radiation Oncology Via an Interactive Open House

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Background

- Radiation oncology has experienced a progressive decline in the numbers of applicants over the past years, with multiple studies showing lack of exposure to the field as a contributing factor.
- We hypothesized a positive effect in radiation oncology interest and involvement within our department following the open house.

Aim

- To assess the impact that an interactive, in-person event had on medical student's exposure and interest in the field of radiation oncology.

Methods

- Medical students at the University of Oklahoma were invited to The Stephenson Cancer Center for an interactive open house.
- The event was made up of three group stations:
 - simulation with volunteer aquaplast mask fitting
 - contouring cases in dosimetry
 - a tour of the therapy machines
- It concluded with a group dinner including current residents and attendings stimulating casual conversation and questions.
- A REDCap survey was later emailed to the medical students that attended.

Results

DEMOGRAPHICS	
Total Medical Students	11
Medical School Year	
MS1	54.55%
MS2	36.36%
MS3	9.09%
MS4	0.00%
Allopathic or Osteopathic	
Allopathic	100.00%
Osteopathic	0.00%
RO Exposure before the Open House	
None	9.09%
Minimal	45.45%
Moderate	27.27%
Actively Involved	18.18%

Table 1.

ASSESSMENT	
Usefulness of the Open House in Exposing Students to RO	
Not Helpful	0.00%
Somewhat Helpful	27.27%
Very Helpful	72.73%
Contact with the Department after the Open House	
Not In Contact	36.36%
Planning to Reach Out	9.09%
In Contact	36.36%
Involved in Research	18.18%
Interest in Applying to RO before the Open House	
None	36.36%
Somewhat	63.64%
Very	0.00%
Interest in Applying to RO after the Open House	
None	9.09%
Somewhat	90.91%
Very	0.00%

Table 2.



Conclusion

- Most attendees found the open house to be "very helpful" in exposing them to the field of Radiation Oncology and everyone would recommend it to a fellow student.
- Since hosting this event, our department has experienced a significant influx in medical student involvement.
- Expanding our invitations to all medical students within the state, and advocating for similar events nationwide, can foster medical student interest and participation in radiation oncology.

References

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