



Top 10 Ways to Research Residency Programs ...and be Happy with the Result

- 10. Begin with some serious introspection.** What kind of doctor do you want to be? Which specialty? Where do you want to practice? (*"I guess I like the city, and rodeos are not my thing."*)
- 9. Think about lifestyle.** The program that will help you develop the best clinical skills might require you to sacrifice too much. (*"I hate my life."*)
- 8. Talk to... everyone.** Get information on as many programs as possible. Talk to recent residents. Ask them not only about their program but what they didn't like about others. Keep in mind that each person will have their biases and focus on different traits. (*"That program sucked. They decorated with post-modern decor!"*)
- 7. Look for signs that the hospital you are applying to is in financial dire straits.** (*"We are serving drinks for lunch, at the water fountain, but only two sips."*)
- 6. Consider salary within the context of the cost of living.** What's fabulously wealthy (*well, maybe not quite*) in one locale would barely keep you alive in New York. (*"Ramen again..."*)
- 5. Does the program have support and mentors for professional development in your areas of special interest?** i.e. cardiothoracic transplant surgery, community program development, activism, research opportunities. Were expectations met? (*"It's OK I guess. I mean, I got through it and survived."*)
- 4. Is there some formalized professional development program?** Do final year residents feel comfortable with their career plans? Were they supported in applying to fellowships and jobs? (*"I don't know... something will come along."*)
- 3. How supportive is the program of resident needs?** Is there an institutionalized way for housestaff to have concerns met, like CIR, or at least a resident council? Ask many direct questions. Is food available at night, are there free meals, is parking an issue... what about at continuity clinics? (*"Oh, yeah... there is a \$40 a day parking garage right across the street."*)
- 2. Do you fit in with the residents there?** This is particularly important in smaller programs. Social circles tend to be limited in residency. Is everyone married and are you single, or is everyone single and are you married? (*"Can I bring my four and two year old to the nightclub, and does the two drink minimum apply?"*)
- 1. Attend residency fairs, talk to residents, and search ERAS.** (*"Duh..."*)

