



Reducing Bias in Trainee Selection

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A Bit of History

- ▶ Intern selection in Atlanta, a decade ago
- ▶ Feedback from staff and trainees
 - ▶ Careless/biased comments about applicants
 - ▶ Unstructured meetings/ranking discussions
 - ▶ Impact of trainee involvement/input
 - ▶ Lack of consistency in review and ranking processes



A Look at the Literature



- ▶ Many studies are older and outdated
- ▶ Not much there in terms of data driven approaches to intern selection
 - ▶ One study by Plutchik, Klein, & Contes (1970) tried to expedite the selection process by developing rating scales for candidates based on several qualities (e.g., likeableness, openness, self-awareness, independence)
 - ▶ Found that inter rater reliability was low
 - ▶ The overall score discriminated between applicants solely on the basis of the interview

A Look at the Literature cont'

- ▶ Other articles on intern selection emphasized:
 - ▶ Academic preparation and clinical experience
 - ▶ Biases about type of program (e.g., clinical vs. counseling)
 - ▶ Personality characteristics
 - ▶ In one study (Plutchik et al.), “complaining” was found to be such an undesirable characteristic it outranked any other applicant qualities
 - ▶ “psychological woundedness” (Ivey and Partington, 2012) was favored in autobiographical essays
 - ▶ Ginkel, Davis, & Michael (2010) found an increased importance placed on personality (i.e., interview, professional demeanor, personality characteristics, and personal reactions to the candidate)
 - ▶ Most often endorsed exclusion criteria - **interview**

Our Goal

- ▶ To identify the strongest candidates for our training programs
 - ▶ Data-driven processes
 - ▶ Culture of inclusion
 - ▶ Careful attention to areas of potential bias

Common Biases in Selection/Hiring

- ▶ First impressions
- ▶ Similarity attraction
- ▶ Stereotypes
- ▶ Halo/horns effects
- ▶ Intuition/overconfidence



Application Review

- ▶ Factors of interest
 - ▶ Quality of doctoral program, academic performance
 - ▶ Quantity and quality of clinical practicum training
 - ▶ Hours of experience
 - ▶ Exposure to different types of assessment
 - ▶ Report writing
 - ▶ Number and type of training sites
 - ▶ Breadth vs. depth of clinical training
 - ▶ Research/publications/CV
 - ▶ Verbal intelligence, writing ability
 - ▶ Answers to AAPI essay questions
 - ▶ Letters of reference



Reducing Bias in App Review

- ▶ Multiple reviewers of each application
- ▶ Review groups carefully constructed
 - ▶ Core Training Committee staff, Diversity Education Committee staff in every group
 - ▶ New and experienced reviewers mixed
 - ▶ Diversity variables of reviewers considered
 - ▶ Representation of staff from different clinics/programs
 - ▶ Groups change annually
- ▶ Operationalizing program quality
- ▶ Structured rating forms
- ▶ Reviewer team meetings, interview recommendations

Interviews



- ▶ Factors of Interest:
 - ▶ Communication/interpersonal skills
 - ▶ Professionalism/ethics
 - ▶ Case conceptualization skills (intervention, assessment)
 - ▶ Diversity sensitivity
 - ▶ Openness to learning and supervision
 - ▶ Evident interest in/fit with the training program

Reducing Bias in Interviews

- ▶ Selection prep meeting w/ staff and trainees
- ▶ Multiple interviewers per candidate
- ▶ Interview teams carefully constructed
 - ▶ Representation from different rotations/programs
 - ▶ Diversity variables of interviewers considered
 - ▶ Invested supervisors
 - ▶ Teams shuffled across interview days
 - ▶ Topics assigned
- ▶ Structured post-interview debriefings, notes taken

Ranking Meetings

▶ Goals:

- ▶ Identify the most desired candidates for the program
- ▶ Identify candidates that should not be ranked
- ▶ Consider data from BOTH applications and interviews
 - ▶ Objective and subjective
- ▶ Ensure all perspectives are heard and considered
- ▶ Use democratic processes to make difficult decisions

▶ Requirements:

- ▶ Time and sustenance
- ▶ An amazing spreadsheet
- ▶ A respectful team environment
- ▶ Organization and interpersonal management skills

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