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Medical Student Forum

THE MEDICAL SCHOOL YEARS

Michael C. Bond, MD,* Mohamad Ali Cheaito, MD,† Brett Rosen, MD,‡ Ryan Shanahan, MD,§||
Joel M. Schofer, MD, MBA, CDR, MC, USN,¶ and Amin Kazzi, MD†**

*Department of Emergency Medicine, University of Maryland School of Medicine, Baltimore, Maryland, †Department of Emergency Medicine, American University of Beirut, Beirut, Lebanon, ‡York Hospital Emergency Medicine Residency Program, York, Pennsylvania, §Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland, ||St. John's Regional Medical Center, Oxnard, California, ¶Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, Portsmouth, Virginia, and **Department of Emergency Medicine, University of California, Irvine, California

Reprint Address: Amin Kazzi, MD, MAEM, FAAEM, Department of Emergency Medicine, American University of Beirut Medical Center, PO Box 11-0236, Riad El Solh, 1107 2020 Beirut, Lebanon.

□ **Abstract**—Medical school can be very challenging, especially when students are considering applying to competitive specialties, like emergency medicine. Once medical students know that emergency medicine is the field they want to specialize in, a multitude of other questions arise, including how many EM rotations should they do? How can they shine during their EM rotations? When should they schedule their rotations, electives, and sub-internships? How can they get the strongest letters of recommendation? What are residency program directors looking for? Therefore, we are going to present in the Medical Student Forum section of the *Journal of Emergency Medicine* a series of six articles covering this and more. © 2019 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

□ **Keywords**—EM; emergency medicine; match; medical student; residency; resident; rotations

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The road to medical school is long and arduous. Students face many challenges before they reach their end goals. The first challenge is getting into medical school. Many high school students go to college for “pre-med”; however, few will be able to obtain the grades and Medical College Admission Test scores that are required for entrance into medical school. Although getting into medical school may be difficult, once there, medical students are faced with yet another challenge, namely, the need to distinguish themselves from their peers in order to be selected for a competitive residency program. Medical students should be aware that the more competitive the residency program is, the lower the acceptance rate. Similarly, the more competitive the medical specialty, the harder it is to match (1,2). For example, the interest in emergency medicine (EM) seems to be on the rise, making it one of the most highly competitive fields (3,4). In the 2019 National Resident Matching Program (The Match), 238 EM programs participated, offering 2488 positions and a match rate of 98.8% (5).

Learning how to stand out from the rest of the pack will increase the medical students’ chances of getting an interview and training at the program of their choice. Accordingly, we are going to present a comprehensive series of articles in the *Medical Student Forum* section of the *Journal of Emergency Medicine*, based on the second edition of the American Academy of Emergency

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Medicine's Resident and Student Association *Rules of the Road for Medical Students: The Guide for A Career in Emergency Medicine*.

This is the second compilation of articles, consisting of around six articles. In these articles we will discuss how medical students can make the most of their time in medical school, and how to make sure they are competitive applicants to The Match.

We will start off by elaborating on the best way to schedule the third- and fourth-year clerkships to optimize the medical students' ability to decide on a field of medicine to study, and ideally, to prepare them for a career in EM. We continue to expand on the EM clerkship, including the ideal time, location, and number of EM clerkships. Moreover, we guide medical students through the process of getting involved in research or scholarly activities during medical school and provide them with the tools that will help them acquire leadership qualities desired by program directors. Furthermore, we dedicate an article to discuss Emergency Medicine Interest Groups (EMIG), informing medical students on how to get involved and make the most out of the EMIG. Lastly, we guide students on how to plan their medical school finances.

In conclusion, going through medical school may be tough. Medical students applying to competitive specialties like EM have to make sure of their competitive-

ness as applicants. Accordingly, the authors hope the readers find this collection of articles highly valuable and a good preparation for the medical school journey.

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