Ask these questions before finalizing your Match rank-order list

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As a medical student, submitting your Match rank-order list is a key step toward determining your future as a physician. In advance of the Feb. 26 deadline, there are a few things you will want to account for.

In speaking with veterans of the Match and examining a recent survey of residency program applicants, it’s clear there are some questions to answer before submitting your final rank-order list.

How do other residency applicants rank programs?
What factors do medical students consider most—and least—when choosing residency programs? Recent data released by the National Resident Matching Program (NRMP) shed some light on that question.

Should you considering nonclinical interests?
Currently a chief resident in the Department of Ophthalmology at Harvard Medical School, Grayson Armstrong, MD, MPH, had become interested in health care accessibility while in medical school.

Dr. Armstrong, who was elected to the AMA Board of Trustees in 2019, wanted to continue working in public policy during his residency, but he knew that would require time in Washington. Not every residency program was on board with that, he said.
Where do you want to live during residency training?
Learn more about how often U.S. allopathic senior medical students take geographic location into account in making their Match rank-order list, and some of the reasons to do so.

Better to follow your head or your heart?
Matt Lecuyer, MD, formerly a pediatric emergency medicine fellow at Brown University, went through the Match twice. He says that what you do as a resident, rather than where you do it, is most likely to shape your future.

If you’re an M3 looking ahead to next year’s Match, you should know that FREIDA™, the AMA Residency & Fellowship Database®, offers more than 35 filters to sort programs by location, program type, application information, demographics, benefits, special tracks and more.

And if you’re still deciding which specialty to pursue, the AMA’s Specialty Guide simplifies medical students’ specialty selection process, highlights major specialties, details training information, and provides access to related association information.

The AMA’s “Shadow Me” Specialty Series, meanwhile, offers advice directly from physicians about life in their specialties. Check out her insights to help determine whether a career in psychiatry and addiction medicine might be a good fit for you.