Tips and Tricks for the Interventional Cardiology Application Process

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First Question: Do you really want to do this?

Best piece of advice I received when choosing a field:

1. Do you enjoy reading about it?
2. Do you think you will be good at it?
3. Is the most mundane aspect of the field something you will be interested in?
Reasons not to do Interventional Cardiology:

• Long training- 8 post-graduate years
• Long hours
• Call- probably the most grueling of any field
• Occupational hazards
  • Radiation
  • Orthopedic issues
  • Sleep deprivation
• Tightening job market and declining salaries
• Family considerations
  • You will work the hardest when your family needs you the most
Preparing for Interventional Training

• Show interest during your cath lab rotations
  • Do as many cases as possible, but not at the expense of your colleagues*
  • You will be judged more critically on your pre- and post-procedure care of patients than your technical skills early on
  • Show up to all conferences
  • This is a team sport - be a team player

• Work hard in ALL of your rotations
  • Weak performance in other rotations is a red flag
  • Get as much imaging experience as you can

• Identify a mentor
  • Research
  • Be willing to make it a two-way street
  • The individual must mentor you clinically as well
COCATS 4 Task Force 10: Training in Cardiac Catheterization

Endorsed by the Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions

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- **COCATS Level I**
  - 4 months in the CCL
  - 100 diagnostic cardiac catheterization cases
    - At least 50 involve coronary angiography
    - At least 25 involve hemodynamic assessment of valvular disease, pericardial disease

- **COCATS Level 2**
  - 6 months in the CCL
  - 300 diagnostic cardiac catheterization cases
  - 100 peripheral diagnostic cases (not carotid) if interesting in pursuing competency in peripheral angiography

- **COCATS Level 3**
  - Interventional Training
• Be comfortable and competent in diagnostic catheterization prior to starting interventional fellowship.
• Gain as much experience as possible in your last year of cardiology training prior to starting interventional training.
• Hit the ground running!!!
• Detrimental to training program and trainee if too much time is spent early on “re-training” in diagnostic catheterization.
Soul Searching: What Do I Want to Do?

• You can’t do it all...
  • Definitely need to learn coronary intervention
  • It is the basis for all of interventional cardiology
  • Given smaller wires, devices, etc., more technically challenging than much of structural/peripheral

• But you should probably focus in something
  • Coronary/CHIP/CTO
  • Vascular
  • Structural
  • Research

• Setting
  • Academics
  • Practice

This is where you need to focus your search of programs
Don’t simply play the “name game”
Try to target programs that match your specific interest
What to Look For in a Training Program

- Will the program give you the clinical training that you want
  - Standard PCI yes. But CHIP/CTO vs. Vasc vs. Structural
  - Is the program 1 year or 2 year
    - Be wary of programs that offer all interventional training on one year
    - Do you have to reapply for the second year or guaranteed?
      - How successful are programs at placing fellows in advanced programs?

- Does the program have a track record of mentorship
  - Both research and clinical

- Are the fellows happy with the program

- Is the program actively engaged in finding you a job

- How successful is the program at job placement
Tips and Tricks for the Interventional Cardiology Fellowship Application Process

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Outline

• Interventional Cardiology: Is it for you?
• Preparation during General Cardiovascular Fellowship
• Career Decisions (subspecialty training, academic)
• How to Evaluate Training Programs
• General Information on Certifications
• What Programs look for in Trainees
• Preparing the Application
• How to Get Noticed
• Navigating the Process and Timeline/Accepting an Offer
• Application No No’s
How to Evaluate Training Programs

• For list of ACGME programs
  – https://apps.acgme.org/ads/public/reports/report/1
    • Program number and name
    • Address and email contact
    • Program Director
    • Accreditation status

• To determine if program participates in ERAS
  – https://services.aamc.org/eras/erasstats/par/index.cfm

• Get additional information from program website
• Unanswered questions contact program coordinator
• Confirm visa type is supported at the institution
Interventional Cardiology Programs  
Academic Year 2017-2018  
United States

List of accredited programs within this specialty and those newly accredited programs with future effective dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Number / Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Program Director</th>
<th>Accreditation Status</th>
<th>Effective Date</th>
<th>Core/Related Program</th>
<th>Core/Related Specialty</th>
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<tr>
<td>[1523512113] Albany Medical Center Program</td>
<td>Albany Medical Center Med Cade 17 47 New Scotland Avenue Albany NY 12208  Ph: (518) 262-5076  Fax: (518) 262-5082 <a href="mailto:onalverm@mail.almed.edu">onalverm@mail.almed.edu</a></td>
<td>Augustin Delago, MD</td>
<td>Continued Accreditation</td>
<td>1/19/2017</td>
<td>[1403531248] Albany Medical Center Program Raymond P. Smith, MD <a href="mailto:smithR4@siemu.albanymed.edu">smithR4@siemu.albanymed.edu</a></td>
<td>Internal medicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[1524121050] Albert Einstein Medical Center Program</td>
<td>Albert Einstein Medical Center 5501 Old York Road Levy Building, 2nd Floor, Room 3232 Philadelphia PA 19141  Ph: (215) 456-5955  Fax: (215) 456-7926 <a href="mailto:morfeld@einstein.edu">morfeld@einstein.edu</a></td>
<td>Sean F. Janzer, MD</td>
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<td>[1404113169] Albert Einstein Medical Center Program Glenn Eger, MD <a href="mailto:medecono@einstein.edu">medecono@einstein.edu</a></td>
<td>Internal medicine</td>
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<tr>
<td>[1524112061] Allegheny Health Network Medical Education Consortium (AHN) Program</td>
<td>Allegheny General Hospital Division of Interventional Cardiology 320 East North Avenue, 4 Fl, Snydor Pavilion Pittsburgh PA 15212  Ph: (412) 398-6270  Fax: (412) 395-6392 <a href="mailto:Carolyn.Bowers@ahn.org">Carolyn.Bowers@ahn.org</a></td>
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<td>[1525613114] Aurora Health Care Program</td>
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<td>[1524831061] Baylor College of Medicine Program</td>
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<td>Nasser Lakis, MD, MS</td>
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<td>Internal medicine</td>
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<tr>
<td>[1524832067] Baylor College of Medicine Program</td>
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<td>[1404821422] Baylor College of Medicine Program Richard Hamill, MD <a href="mailto:rhamill@bcm.edu">rhamill@bcm.edu</a></td>
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Interventional Cardiology (Internal Medicine)

This is a December Application Cycle specialty. Applicants may begin applying and programs begin receiving applications starting December 1st.
General Information on Certifications

• ABIM certification in interventional cardiology requires:
  – ABIM certification in Cardiovascular Disease
  – Completion of an ACGME or RCPSC program
    • 12 month clinical fellowship
    • Procedural requirements (250 or greater)
    • Receive satisfactory ratings of overall clinical competence

• ABIM certification in Adult Congenital Heart Disease (ACHD)
  – ABIM certification in Cardiovascular Disease or Pediatrics
  – Completion of a 24 month ACGME program
    • ACHD fellowship programs will be available through the ACGME on or after July 1, 2019

• Valid medical license/Pass the certification exam
General Information on Certifications

- **ABVM endovascular exam: fellowship training pathway**
  - Completion of a formal ABIM-accredited fellowship that included training in peripheral interventional procedures.
  - Performance of at least 100 diagnostic and 50 therapeutic peripheral interventions (1/2 primary operator)
  - Written attestation by the fellowship program director
  - Counting of cases follow the guidelines outlined in the ACC COCATS-2

- **Vascular Medicine**
  - 12 months of training typically during a third or fourth year, solely devoted to vascular medicine
What Programs look for in Trainees

- No single type of individual is favored
- Most programs seek to train individuals who have demonstrated the utmost commitment to the field of cardiovascular medicine through clinical care, research, teaching, innovation, or other leadership activities
- Demonstrated achievements or potential
- Diversity is positive
Preparing the Application

• Know the application deadlines
• Prepare a flawless application
• LOR are extremely important
  – Verbal commitment to write a supportive letter and submit on time
  – Able to comment on your cath lab skills
    • Cath lab or IC program director
  – Selected non-clinical references (research, advocacy, etc.)
• Personal statement reflects goals
• CV is organized and up to date
  – Name bolded on publications
  – Highlight post graduate achievements
How to Get Noticed

• For programs on the top of your list
  – Email the program director and coordinator when your application is submitted
  – Communicate important updates to your file
    • Publications, presentation at national meeting, visa status
  – Have a mentor advocate for you through email or a personal call
Navigating the Process and Timeline

• IC does not have a match program
  – Timeline for each program differs
  – # positions and chance of acceptance varies by program
  – Some programs do not interview external candidates
  – Interview dates vary considerably (Jan- April)

• Open line of communication with PDs and coordinators during the process
  – Offers and replies are generally made quickly after interviews
  – Do not back out of a commitment in the absence of extenuating circumstances
Application Process No No’s

• Never provide misleading or false information
• Proofread!
• Do not accept a position you don’t intent to keep
  • Cancel remaining interviews
  • Withdraw from other programs
  • Ask for decision extension or decline the position
Dr. Shah’s Application Pet Peeves

- Frequent emails
- Cut and paste emails
- Emails referring to the wrong training program
- “Dear PD” emails
- Emails with name misspelled
- Any misspelling on application, esp personal statement
  - The personal statement can only hurt you