

2009Fellowship & Job Market Surveys:

A Report on the 2009 RISE, FISE, and FISHE Surveys

In 2009, a total of 2,507 individuals participated in the 2009 Resident In-Service Examination conducted by the American Society for Clinical Pathology. Each year, as part of the RISE, the ASCP Resident Council sponsors a survey on fellowships and the job market. These data are then compiled by ASCP in order to provide information useful to pathology residents and fellows, residency and fellowship program directors, and prospective employers.

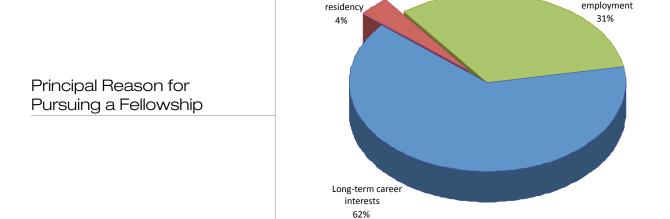
Of the 2,507 respondents to the survey, 682 were PGY 1 residents, 623 were PGY 2 residents, 618 were PGY 3 residents, and 584 were PGY 4 or greater. An additional 55 respondents identified themselves as being in fellowship (post-residency) training.

The ASCP Fellowship and Job Market Surveys are sponsored by the ASCP Resident Council. The surveys and this report were prepared in collaboration with Henry Rinder, MD, FASCP, Chair of the ASCP RISE Committee.

Felt it was necessary to secure

APPLYING FOR PATHOLOGY FELLOWSHIPS

More than 90% of pathology residents apply for additional fellowship training after completion of their residency program.

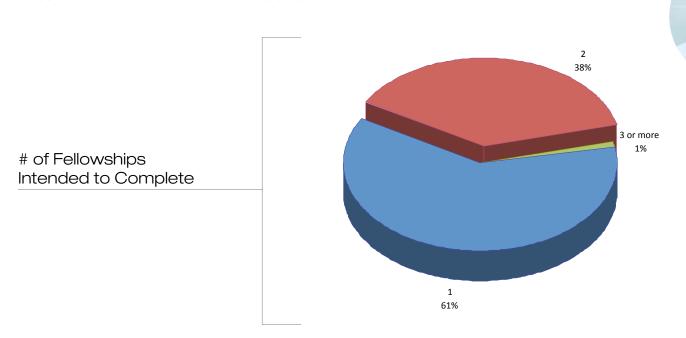


Desired job not

available after

The reasons for applying for fellowships are straightforward; slightly less than two-thirds of residents stated that long-term career interests were the main reason they sought fellowship training. Another third felt that fellowship training was most important for gaining future employment.

The majority of PGY-3 and PGY-4 residents state that they plan on completing only a single fellowship, but it is important to note that a substantial minority of residents plan to apply for two different fellowship training programs.

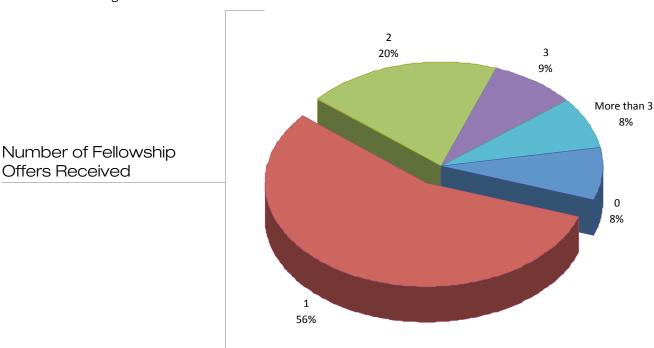


A small number of residents (<10%) do not apply for fellowships, either because they plan to move directly into the job market or they fail to receive a fellowship offer and therefore must seek a job directly out of residency.

The top ten fellowships that residents intended to apply for are listed in rank order as follows:

- Surgical Pathology
- Hematopathology
- Cytopathology
- Gastrointestinal Pathology
- Dermatopathology
- Forensic Pathology
- Blood Banking/Transfusion Medicine
- Gynecologic Pathology
- Genitourinary Pathology
- Oncologic Pathology

Somewhat more than half of residents only receive a single fellowship offer; this number may be an overestimate since many residents, having heard positively from their first choice, are then likely to inform other fellowship programs that they have taken a position and are no longer available.



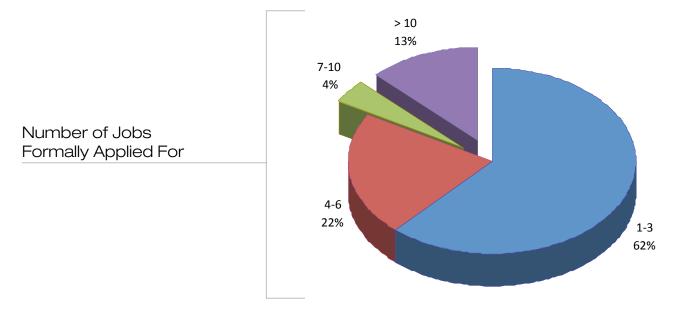
Still, more than one-third of residents receive two or more fellowship offers, suggesting that there is heavy competition among programs for desirable fellowship applicants.

A majority of respondents (81%) expressed support for a standardized fellowship application, and 79% supported a universally accepted timeline. Most (74%) would prefer to apply for a fellowship during their third postgraduate year.

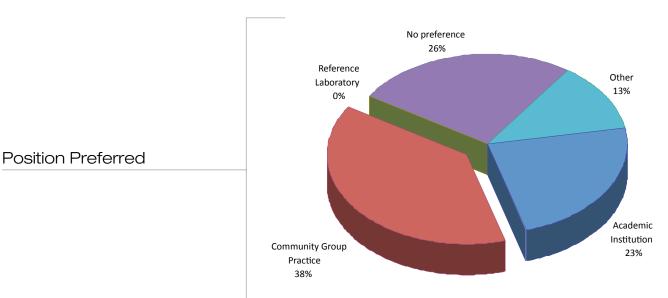
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APPLYING FOR PATHOLOGY JOBS AFTER RESIDENCY

Although a relatively small number of pathology residents go directly into the job market, it is important to understand their situation, motivating factors, and other relevant information for future trainees considering this option. More than half of the 120 residents who forayed into the job market applied in a targeted manner (to only 1-3 positions), but a significant subset of residents applied to many more job offerings.



Preferences for certain job types were not overwhelming in any direction; the largest group of residents was interested in community practice, followed by those with an academic bent. An equal number to the latter had no specific preference, and a small subset listed "Other" as their preference, presumably including governmental and corporate entities.



Slightly more than half of residents learned of jobs through faculty and by word-of-mouth; the next two significant sources (making up about one-third of available job listings) were through contacting potential employers directly and using the on-line site www.pathologyoutlines.com.

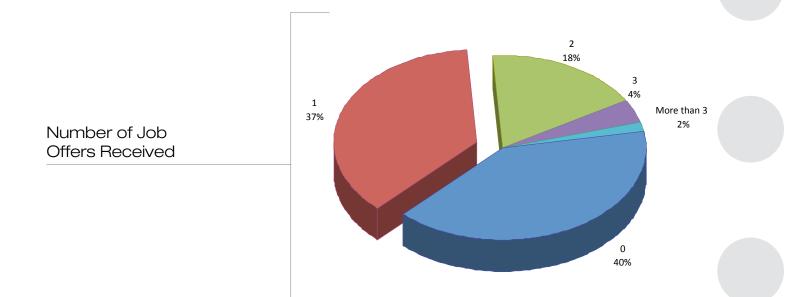
Geography plays an important role in job selection; two-thirds of residents stated that their job search was limited to certain parts of the country. This is overwhelmingly because of personal situation and preference. The main reason for nearly 70% of residents citing a geographic restriction was family concerns (including a spouse's employment) and lifestyle, while the remainder chose an area to which they were native. Few residents chose an area because of professional contacts.

Academic jobs were preferred over community practice in the mid-Atlantic and Northeast regions of the U.S., while this preference was reversed in the Midwest, North Central, and Southeast. Preferences for academic and community practice were evenly split among those moving to the West Coast, South Central US, and internationally.

Geographic preferences for academic and community jobs may be based on what jobs are available in desirable communities, but salaries are clearly distinct between these two employment opportunities. About 75% of academic starting annual salaries were less than \$150,000 while 75% of community starting salaries were greater than \$150,000.

About 40% of residents received offers to remain as an attending at their training program; about half accepted with an eye towards staying long-term.





Although some residents received multiple job offers, 40% of those who formally applied for positions failed to receive a single offer. For those residents who did find employment, there was a clear delineation of factors that they cited in their job choice.

Ranking of factors in job choice for residents

Very important to the choice of position

- The presentation of the staff and institution at the job interview
- The likelihood of long-term job security
- Family factors
- Job availability in the desired geographic region

Somewhat important to the choice of position

- Opportunities for career advancement
- Opportunities for subspecialty practice
- Salary and other fiscal considerations

Not important to the choice of position

- Opportunities for research
- Opportunities for teaching

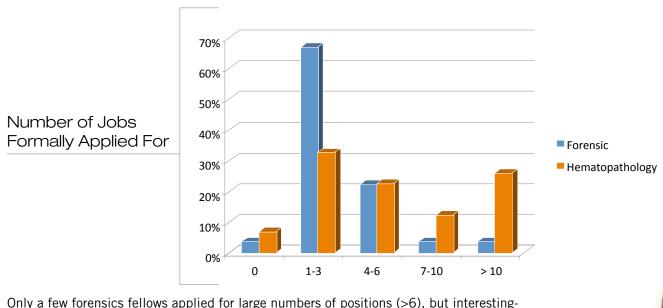
A small percentage of residents choose to look for jobs immediately following their residency training. There are opportunities in both community and academic practice, and the latter are often available where they trained. Overall, however, the job market for residents coming directly out of training is tough, with a significant number failing to receive offers.



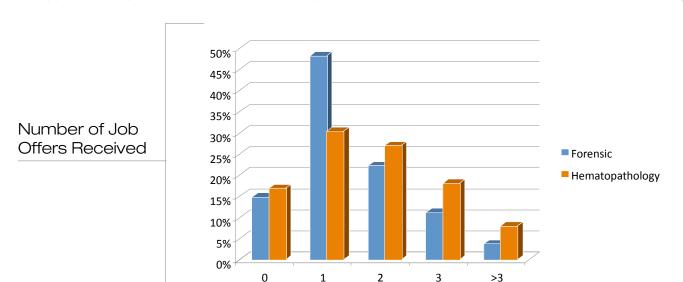
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APPLYING FOR PATHOLOGY JOBS AFTER FELLOWSHIP

ASCP Fellowship in-service examinations conducted in 2009 similarly used post-exam surveys to gather data and offer the chance to query fellows in Forensics and Hematopathology about their experience in the job market.



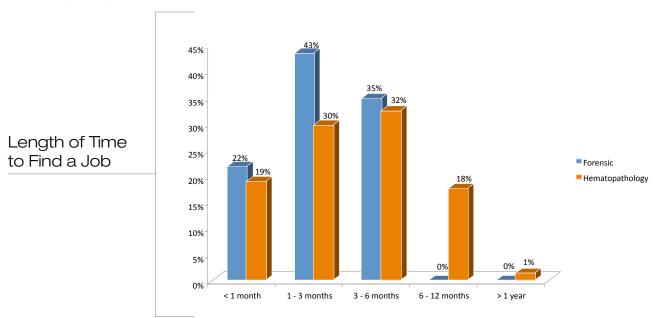
Only a few forensics fellows applied for large numbers of positions (>6), but interestingly, there is a distinct difference between forensic and hematopathology fellows in their spread for number of applications. This difference could be related to fewer openings, and thus greater competition, for hematopathology jobs. A small number of fellows did not apply for jobs, possibly because they are moving on to a second fellowship.



About one-third of forensics fellows and about half of hematopathology fellows received multiple job offerings. Importantly, a significant number of fellows did not receive job offers, suggesting that there is still some imbalance between the numbers of job openings versus fellows entering the market for employment.

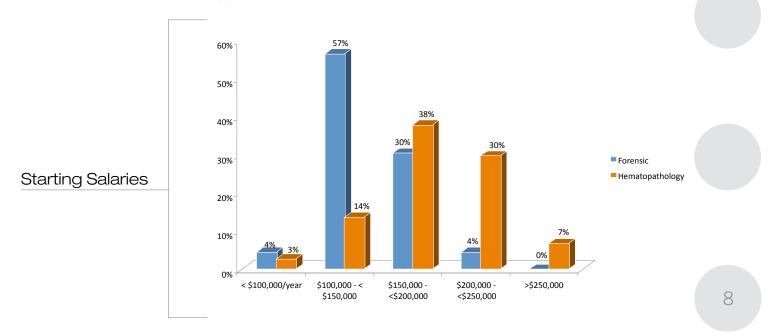
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Although most fellows found jobs fairly quickly, about one-fifth of hematopathology fellows were searching for at least 6 months. About one-third of fellows in both areas received offers from their training program, and like residents, about half accepted with long-term plans to stay.



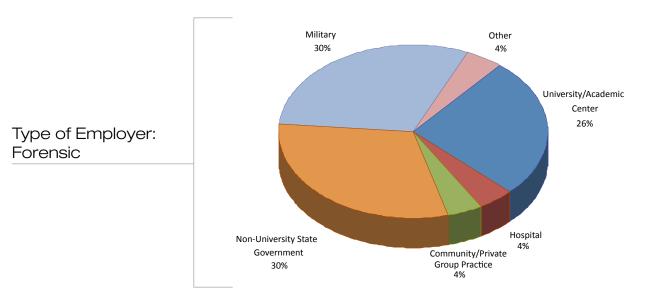
Like residents, fellows acknowledged that geography was important in their job selection; more than two-thirds of fellows (in both disciplines) stated that their job search was limited to specific regions. The reasons for a geographic restriction were nearly identical to residents, i.e. family concerns (e.g. spouse's employment), lifestyle, and being native to the area. Interestingly, a significant percentage of forensics fellows (11%) cited the presence of professional contacts as a primary reason for choosing a specific geographic region.

Starting annual salaries were quite disparate between forensics and hematopathology fellows, with nearly two-thirds of the former receiving less than \$150,000 versus three-fourths of the latter starting greater than \$150,000 per year.

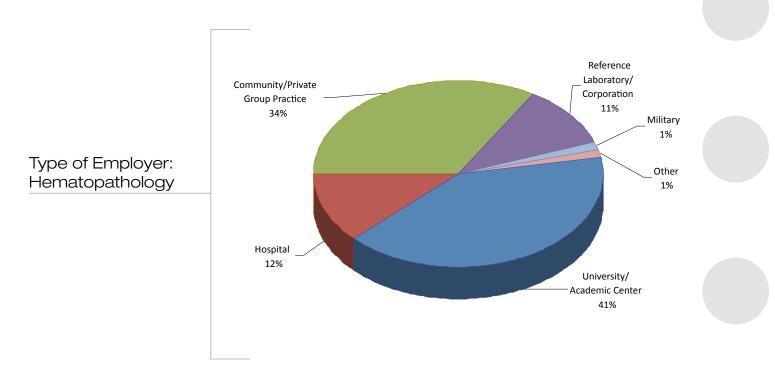


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This disparity was also reflected in bonus pay. Only 35% of forensics fellows received a moving bonus, and none got a signing bonus, while 56% and 15% of hematopathology fellows, respectively, received these benefits. These differences in salary and bonus pay are likely a function of the different types of employers of these two groups of fellows.



Almost two-thirds of forensics fellows went on to jobs with the military or non-University governmental entities, situations which may not offer high starting salaries or bonuses. By contrast, nearly 90% of hematopathology fellows found jobs in community or academic practice, and corporate positions, which have more freedom to offer bonus pay and higher salaries.



When fellows in Forensics and Hematopathology were asked to rank the factors most important in choosing jobs, their reasons and ranking were similar but not identical to that of residents.

Ranking of factors in job choice for fellows

Very important to the choice of position

- . The presentation of the staff and institution at the job interview
- The likelihood of long-term job security
- Family factors
- Job availability in the desired geographic region
- Salary and other fiscal considerations

Somewhat important to the choice of position

- Opportunities for career advancement
- Opportunities for teaching

Not important to the choice of position

- Opportunities for research
- Opportunities for subspecialty practice

Most notable in the ranking difference was that teaching opportunities were more important to fellows than residents in their choice of position. The low ranking for subspecialty practice opportunity for fellows is an interesting finding with several possible explanations. Coming out of a specialty pathology fellowship, applicants may simply assume a priori that the likely jobs available to them are either subspecialty-oriented or have a significant proportion of responsibilities in their subspecialty field. Alternatively, this answer may partly reflect ambivalence towards subspecialty practice, thereby reinforcing the finding from the simultaneous resident survey that a significant proportion of residents enter fellowships because they consider it more critical for securing employment than for long-term career interests.

Acknowledgements

The ASCP RISE Committee wishes to thank the members of the ASCP Resident Council.* In addition, this survey would not be possible without the cooperation of all pathology residency program directors and the participation of all residents and fellows for taking these exams and surveys. We are grateful for your assistance. (Please address comments or questions about this survey to Jay Wagner at jay.wagner@ascp.org/.)

*ASCP Resident Council, 2009-10

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