

# **CDC Reporting New Condition Affecting Residency Applicants: Email Refresh Syndrome (ERS)**

ATLANTA, GA - Each fall, thousands of fourth-year medical students submit residency applications and eagerly wait for interview invitations. This has traditionally been an exciting time for students, but after a recent CDC study it appears this period actually predisposes students to a new condition termed "Email Refresh Syndrome (ERS)," where students quite literally cannot stop checking their emails for interview invites.

Cases have been reported across the contiguous United States, and have reached as far as Hawaii, Canada, and Central America. Although the vector is unknown, what remains clear is that this condition has serious consequences.

We asked a recent acting intern affected by ERS to describe how he was handling his diagnosis:

"It's been really difficult," he said. "You just never know when you might get an invite, so you really have to stay on top of your game. I was checking my email so frequently that I wasn't able to see patients or write notes. Sure, I failed the rotation, but come on, patient care can take a back seat if it means getting into your dream school!"

Clerkship directors are still searching for the solution, as many students continue to flunk required rotations. In fact, ERS has even started to affect students' chances of matching.

One internal medicine program director told us she was initially caught off guard by ERS.

"I was interviewing an applicant in my office, and he just pulled out his phone and started refreshing his email. It was almost like he forgot he was in an interview."

As ERS continues to spread, GomerBlog has heard rumblings that even medical school administrators fear students with this condition may not match, citing their continuous refreshing as a major barrier to actually opening and responding to

interview invites. To ensure an adequate match and future physician workforce, the ACGME has responded by offering programs free wellness modules to match residents currently afflicted by ERS. The risk, however, is that the chronicity of this condition remains to be seen and further randomized controlled trials are needed to study the long-term effects on both the patients and healthcare system as a whole.