

Foot and Ankle Fellowship Websites: An Assessment of Accessibility and Quality

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Introduction/Purpose: The Internet has been reported to be the first informational resource for many fellowship applicants. Despite being a popular resource, no accessibility or quality standards exist for fellowship websites. The objective of this study was to assess the accessibility of orthopaedic foot and ankle fellowship websites and to evaluate the quality of information provided via program websites.

Methods: The American Orthopaedic Foot and Ankle Society (AOFAS) and the Fellowship and Residency Electronic Interactive Database (FREIDA) fellowship databases were accessed to generate a comprehensive list of orthopaedic foot and ankle fellowship programs. The databases were reviewed for links to fellowship program websites and compared with program websites accessed from a Google search. Accessible fellowship websites were then analyzed for the quality of recruitment and educational content pertinent to fellowship applicants.

Results: Forty-seven orthopaedic foot and ankle fellowship programs were identified. The AOFAS database featured direct links to 7 (15%) fellowship websites with the independent Google search yielding direct links to 29 (62%) websites. No direct website links were provided in the FREIDA database. Thirty-six accessible websites were analyzed for content. Program websites featured a mean 44% (range, 5-75%) of the total assessed content. The most commonly presented recruitment content was a program description featured on 94% of fellowship websites. The most commonly presented educational content was a description of fellow operative experience featured on 83% of websites.

Conclusion: There is substantial variability in the accessibility and quality of orthopaedic foot and ankle fellowship websites. Comparison of the results of our study with those of similar investigations indicates a paucity of fellowship websites presenting comprehensive program information to applicants. Recognition of deficits in accessibility and content quality may assist foot and ankle fellowships in improving program information online.

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