

Analysis of Internal Dermatology Matches Following the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Introduction

- This study examines post COVID-19 trends in dermatology residency matches reflecting the field's competitive nature.
- Focus on the impact of the pandemic on match processes and applicant preferences

Objective

- To analyze the trend in internal match rates in dermatology residency programs before and after the pandemic.
- To examine regional match preferences and trends, and assessing how applicants' matching decisions align with their home program's geographic location
- To evaluate the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on residency match processes and outcomes

Methods

- Data sourced from public match lists and regional categorizations of 65 US medical schools
- Comparison of dermatological match rates: pre-pandemic (2020-2022), during pandemic (2021-2022), and post pandemic (2022-2023).

Results

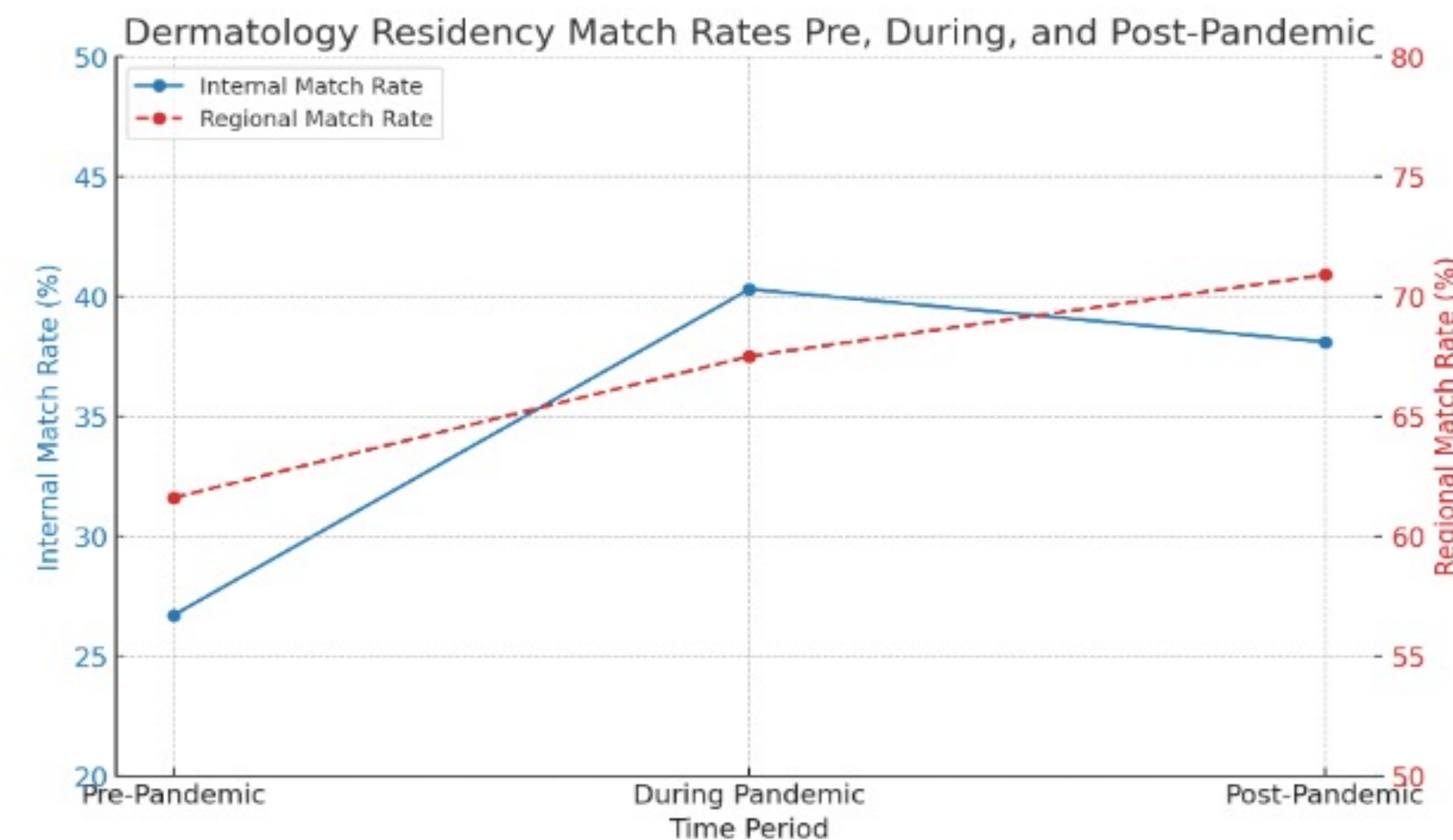


Figure 1: Graph illustrating Dermatology Residency Match Rates, with the Internal Match Rate increasing from pre-pandemic to during pandemic and then slightly declining post-pandemic, while the Regional Match Rate shows a steady increase throughout the same periods.

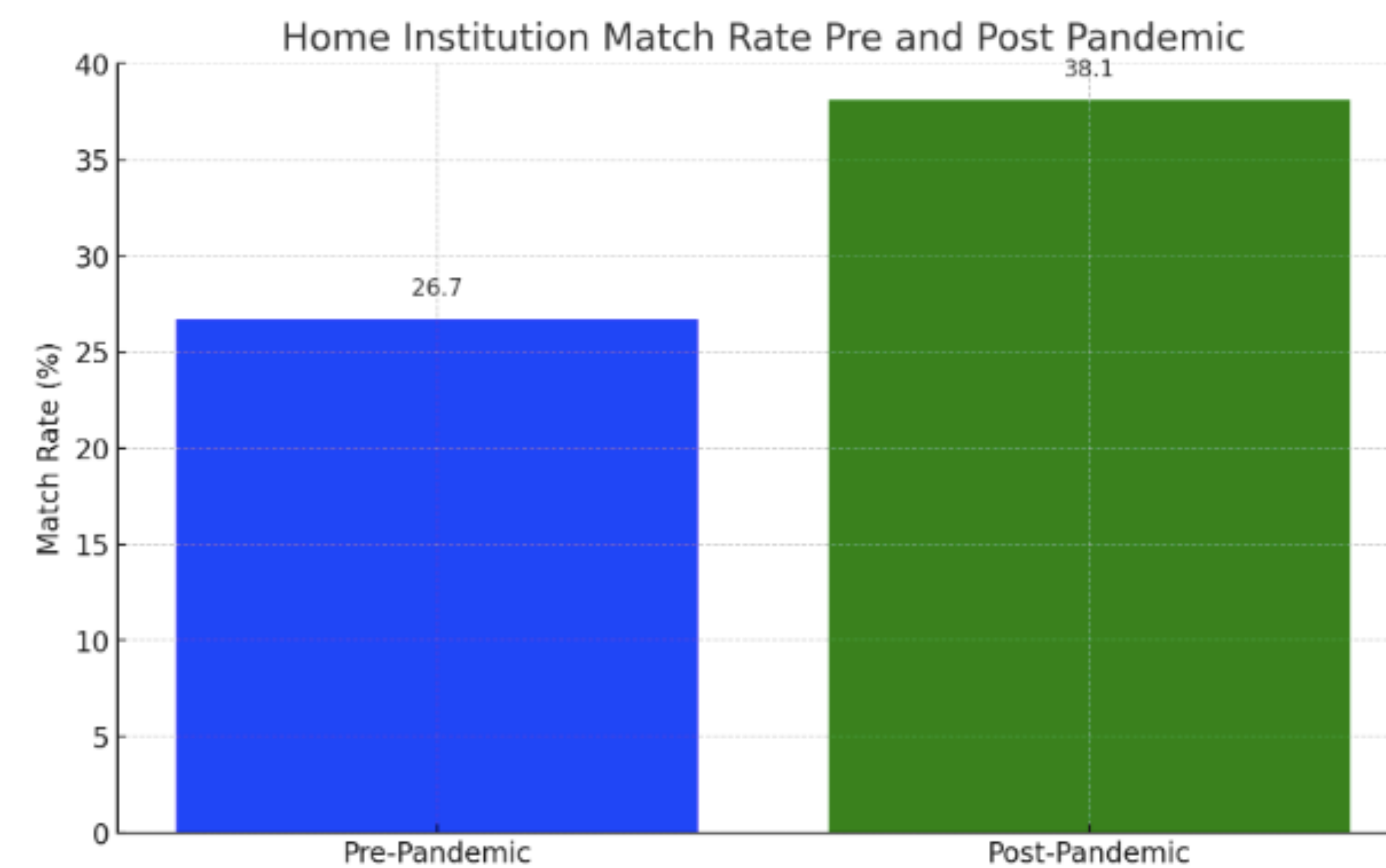


Figure 2: Bar graph showing an increase in the Home Institution Match Rate for Dermatology Residency from 26.7% in the pre-pandemic period to 38.1% in the post-pandemic period.

Applicants Matching Into Dermatology Residency Programs in the 2022-2023 Cycle

Region	Total applicants in the region matched, n	Total applicants matched at home institution, n	Total applicants matched in the same region as their home institution, n	Rate of home matches, %	Rate of same-region matches, %
Central	62	27	47	43.55	75.81
Northeast	52	22	39	42.31	75.00
Southern	79	23	50	29.11	63.29
Western	17	8	13	47.06	76.47
Total	210	80	149	38.1	70.95

Figure 3: Data table summarizing the match rates for applicants into Dermatology Residency Programs by region for the 2022-2023 cycle, showing total matches, home institution matches, and same-region matches with corresponding percentages.

Discussion

- Post-pandemic trends suggests a heightened importance of home program connections.
- Virtual interviews and regional preferences continue to influence match outcomes.
- Preference signals and external rotations play a notable role in the matching process.

Conclusion

- Post-pandemic era sustained increase in internal match rates suggesting a persistent advantage for applicants with a home program despite the resumption of in-person rotations and interviews.
- The data underscores the need for applicants from medical schools without dermatology programs to seek external rotations to improve their chances in an exceedingly competitive specialty.
- Regional preferences remain strong, with 70.95% of applicants matching in the same region as their home institution in the post pandemic cycle, indicating the continued importance of geographic connection in the match process.