

Abstract

Background: First-generation medical students experience difficulty transitioning to and succeeding in medical school. While mentorship is a key factor for achieving success in medicine, few mentorship programs target the specific needs of first-generation medical students.

Purpose: This study aimed to understand perceptions of first-generation medical students and identify how mentorship can best support their needs.

Methods: First-year first-generation medical students participating in a mentorship program at the University of Colorado School of Medicine provided quantitative feedback on perceptions related to their first-generation status, areas of need within mentoring, the quality of their mentor-mentee relationships, and the effectiveness of the mentorship program using a Likert-scale questionnaire (n = 17). Quantitative analysis was performed using descriptive statistics.

Results: Mentees' perceptions of personal well-being are most positive, while perceptions of professional identity and family are most negative. Mentees need most help with residency applications, career planning, professional networking, scholarships, and clinical rotations. Eighty-eight percent of mentees are satisfied with their mentor-mentee relationships. One hundred percent of mentees think the mentorship program is effective in supporting their needs.

Conclusion: Mentorship is an effective method for supporting first-generation medical students. A mentorship program that integrates mentees' family support systems into their medical student experience may help bridge their personal and professional identities.