

The Efficacy and Impact of Health Career Exploration and Guidance Programs on Diversity and Equity in the Healthcare Workforce.

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Background

- ❖ Programs that expose high school students to healthcare careers and medical opportunities are widely implemented, providing guidance for academic courses, standardized test-taking, research opportunities, and career development.
- ❖ One study on Colorado health equity showed that racial and ethnic minorities are underrepresented across all the advanced practice health professions that were surveyed in our study
- ❖ The representation of racial and ethnic minorities in Colorado's healthcare workforce mirrors that of the U.S., suggesting our study results should be generalizable.
- ❖ Objective: estimate the proportion of healthcare professionals that benefit from these programs and go on to work in health professions, which we hypothesized was 20% of those surveyed.
- ❖ We feel that highly effective health career guidance programs improve health outcomes for disadvantaged and oppressed populations by supporting students from these communities to join the healthcare workforce.

Methods

- ❖ Surveyed graduate students in healthcare doctoral/advanced practice degree programs about previous participation in career guidance programs during high school.
- ❖ We also analyzed survey responses to determine how equitable these career guidance opportunities are.
- ❖ We hypothesized that they disproportionately advantaged students based on their:
 - ❖ location (urban vs. rural setting)
 - ❖ socioeconomic status (household income)
 - ❖ Resource availability (medical underserved vs. not)
 - ❖ Race (demographics of respondents)

Degree Programs Surveyed

- ❖ Pharmacy
- ❖ Physical Therapy
- ❖ Dentistry
- ❖ Doctor of Medicine
- ❖ Nursing at various degree programs ranging from B.S.N to Advanced Nurse Practice degrees such as D.N.P.
- ❖ Physician Assistant
- ❖ Master of Science in Anesthesiology
- ❖ Master of Public Health

Results

- ❖ Of the 136 survey responses, 44% stated that they had participated in a health career guidance program during high school, exceeding our hypothesis that at least 20% participated
- ❖ 93% of these participants stated it was influential in their ability to successfully pursue their career
- ❖ When assessing the demographics of our respondents, we found that the majority of the students who benefited from career guidance programs identified as Caucasian at 68%
- ❖ Health career guidance programs accessed by our students were more available in urban settings than rural settings.
- ❖ We plan to use these results to advocate for any county or school district to obtain funding to implement and support career exploration programs.

Conflicts of Interest

- ❖ The authors Sanaa Ahmad and Matthew Hess declare that they have no financial or non-financial conflicts of interest to disclose.

Most Influential Career Experiences

- Shadowing a provider
- Volunteering in a hospital/clinic
- Observing procedures/surgeries
- Tour of a medical campus
- Visit to a cadaver lab
- SAT/ACT prep workshops
- Pre-health advising sessions during high school
- Interview skills/resume workshops
- Other
- Personal statement workshops

Innovation

- ❖ Currently composing a best practices guide to enable any community to implement a healthcare career exploration program.
- ❖ Guide includes most influential experiences and funding/budget information sourced from existing sustainable programs

References

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