



Research Week 2021

Critically investigating diverse perceptions of the holistic medical school environment among Racially, Ethically, and Socially Underrepresented Minority (RES-URM)

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Keywords

Holistic Medical School Environment, Underrepresented Medical Students, and Perceptions

Abstract

Purpose

To assess RES-URM and non-RES-URM medical students' perception of their holistic medical school environment. Underrepresented Minorities (URM) medical students have consistently reported lower levels of satisfaction with their medical school environment compared to their White peers, and continue to report that universities could do more to demonstrate their stated commitment to diversity in medical schools. Despite the many benefits of diversifying the student population in medical, little is known about how to systematically support diverse medical students and how to create an inclusive environment for racially, ethnically, and socially underrepresented minorities (RES-URM).

Methods

A quasi-experimental mixed methods observational study at a large academic-medical school in the Pacific Northwest region. The quantitative component includes a survey of all medical students using validated variables from the John Hopkins Learning Environment Scale (JHLES) and the Medical School Diversity Climate survey. Analyses include ordinal logistic regression and instrumental variable regression analysis using STATA. The qualitative component includes four focus groups that use semi-structured interview guides adapted from a study conducted at the University of Chicago, Pritzker School of Medicine (Factors Supporting Student's Success). Grounded theory analysis using NVivo will be used for qualitative analyses.

Results

Key variables include Peer-Relationships, Faculty-Relationships, Academic/Curriculum, Meaningful Engagement, Mentoring/Coaching, Inclusion and Safety, Physical Safety, Racial Climate, Witness Discrimination, Negative Role Modeling and Experience Mistreatment. Anticipated results will include the extent that RES-URM and non-RES-URM medical students experience the same medical school environment differently for each outcome variable.

Discussion

No studies to our knowledge have assessed medical students' holistic medical school environment that incorporates elements of institutional support, academic environment, relationships, mentoring, as well as the diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) climate. Additionally, few studies utilize a comprehensive definition of diversity even though women, LGBTQ, and first in family to attend medical school students experience similar dissatisfaction with their medical school environment. The different experiences based on who we are matters and should be better reflected in medical schools' admissions, curricular, and clinical policies. *One size does not fit all.*