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# Research Week 2023

## PPathway to Leadership: Training students for Healthcare Leadership

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### Keywords

PA Leadership Development, Leadership Curriculum

### Abstract

#### Background

The role of Physician Associates (PAs) are expanding to include more leadership positions, yet there are no formal curricula for PA students in leadership skill development. Our goal was to develop and pilot test a leadership curriculum for PA students that increases their skills in key leadership areas.

#### Approach

We developed a 4-hour leadership session for second year PA students in the 2022-2023 academic year. The curriculum focused on collaboration and communication skills and included didactics, facilitated small group discussions, and a leadership panel with facilitated and student submitted questions. Students were asked baseline questions about their leadership role as PAs and the importance of leadership training in PA school. Additionally, students answered pre- and post-session questions related to their comfort and skills in leadership. Wilcoxon signed rank tests assessed for significant changes post-training.

#### Evaluation

Out of 29 PA students participating in the session, 27 (93%) completed both pre and post surveys. Over 75% of the PA students felt that leadership training should be incorporated into all PA programs and 63% foresee themselves in future leadership roles. The leadership curriculum improved skills and comfort in collaboration and communication. PA students also felt more prepared to bring about change in the healthcare system following the session (7.4% vs 51.9%,  $p=0.001$ ).

#### Implications

PA students are highly interested in pursuing leadership roles in their careers. Our leadership training increased perceived collaboration and communication skills. Therefore, PA programs should incorporate leadership skill training to prepare students for their future work.