

Impact of a pipeline program for early exposure of diverse students to plastic and reconstructive surgery

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Introduction

- Healthcare Early Access for Diverse Students Underrepresented in Plastic Surgery (HEADSUP) is a pipeline program implemented by a group of residents, medical students, and undergraduate students in the Atlanta area with the goal of increasing early exposure to Plastic Surgery
- Current trends in physician representation do not reflect the diverse patient population in the US, particularly among surgical subspecialties (1)
- Targeted mentorship for underrepresented minority (URM) students has shown to improve experiential opportunities and promote pursuit of competitive surgical subspecialties (1)
- This study details program impact for an introductory plastic and reconstructive surgery (PRS) pipeline program implemented in Atlanta

Methods

- Participants were recruited from Morehouse School of Medicine and Georgia State University
- Recruitment was conducted through pre-medical interest groups, class emails, and anatomy lab flyers
- Surveys were administered at the beginning and end of each event evaluating interest in and familiarity with PRS and introductory concepts

Results

Survey Question	Pre-survey N (%)	Post-survey N (%)	P value
Interest in Surgical Career (answer: yes)	19 (70.4)	21 (77.8)	0.5344
Interest in Plastic Surgery Career (answer: yes)	11 (42.3)	14 (51.9)	0.4867
Self-Reported Comprehension of Plastic Surgery (answer: yes)	9 (33.3)	22 (81.5)	0.0003
Knowledge of Top of Reconstructive Ladder (correct response)	2 (7.4)	24 (88.9)	<0.001
Knowledge of flap vs. graft (correct response)	6 (22.2)	24 (88.9)	<0.001
Survey Question	Pre-survey mean number of procedures (SD)	Post-survey mean number of procedures (SD)	P value
Familiarity with cosmetic procedures	3.8 (1.3)	3.7 (1.6)	0.6883
Familiarity with reconstructive procedures	2.2 (1.7)	3.7 (1.9)	0.0009

Figure 1. Pre-surveys were administered at the beginning of the program and post-surveys at the conclusion of case presentations. Two sample tests of proportion were used to compare categorical responses and paired t-tests were performed to compare means.

Results

- Participants included undergraduate, graduate, and first-year medical students that self-identified as URM
- Survey data indicates increased interest in plastic surgery as a career and improved understanding of basic plastic surgery concepts following program completion

Summary and Conclusions

- Diversity among current physicians and surgeons does not mirror that of the US population, leading to poorer health outcomes among diverse patients (1-2)
- The goal of HEADSUP is to bridge the gap in recruitment of URM students to plastic surgery through structured education and mentorship opportunities
- The program curriculum was implemented in Atlanta and designed to be reproduced in other cities and among other specialties
- Future program direction includes design and implementation of a longitudinal program curriculum along with collaboration with other surgical subspecialties

References

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