The Perceived Value of Same-Sex or Race Mentors & Role Models in Academic Medicine

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INTRODUCTION

- Mentorship helps propel career development, program retention & workplace satisfaction. It is often cited as a driver for women & minorities to enter the surgical specialties.
- Representation of females & minorities in surgery remains relatively low, e.g., only 15% of orthopaedic residents are women while racial/ethnic minorities compose only 3-10% of US orthopaedic surgeons.1 2
- Students & residents in these underrepresented groups may find it difficult to find mentors/role models with whom they identify and/or from whom they can obtain the guidance to successfully navigate career & life choices.

OBJECTIVE

- Determine the importance of same-sex & same-race mentorship & their value for career planning, research & life issues

METHODS

- 326 medical students, 309 residents, & 200 faculty at UCDSOM completed an online Qualtrics survey.
- The surveys asked about respondent demographics, attitudes toward role models/mentors, experience providing &/or receiving mentorship, & important factors when choosing a medical specialty. Survey question style was based on a prior study1 with similar aims.
- Respondents were categorized by sex, race, specialty, & level of training & their responses were compared using Fisher’s test analyses with the level of statistical significance set at p<0.05.

RESULTS

- There is a significant difference in the perceived importance of same-sex & same-race mentorship for respondents traditionally underrepresented in medicine.
- Non-white medical students as well as female medical students, residents and faculty feel that they would benefit from more mentors representative of themselves.
- More women than men & more surgical than non-surgical residents felt that same-sex/same-race mentors influenced their specialty choice, although this was not the case for the majority of respondents.

CONCLUSIONS

- There is a significant difference in the perceived importance of same-sex & same-race mentorship for respondents traditionally underrepresented in medicine.
- Non-white medical students as well as female medical students, residents and faculty feel that they would benefit from more mentors representative of themselves.
- More women than men & more surgical than non-surgical residents felt that same-sex/same-race mentors influenced their specialty choice, although this was not the case for the majority of respondents.

REFERENCES


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