A Longitudinal Study Assessing the Factors that Influence Medical Students Attitudes towards Underserved Communities

Ashley Farley, Courtney Johnson, Shivani Raman, Chelsea Anasi, Casey Cai, Katherine Cantu, Thanos Rossopoulos, Philip Day PhD, Nora Gimpel MD
Department of Community and Family Medicine, University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center

Introduction
- Studies using the Medical Student Attitudes Towards Underserved (MSATU) questionnaire showed a decrease in medical students’ interest in and attitude towards working with underserved populations as they progress through their medical education.

Purpose
- To identify relationships between various attitudes, skills, and experiential learning activities that promote favorable attitudes and future plans to work in underserved communities.
- To construct a longitudinal database that can be used for further research studies of student character development over the course of their training.

Methods
A survey questionnaire (91-99 questions based on timepoint), using multiple choice questions, Likert scale, and open-ended questions, has been developed using existing validated instruments:
- Medical Student Attitudes Towards Underserved (MSATU)
- Leadership Self-efficacy as measured by the Leadership Self-Efficacy Survey (LSES)
- Interprofessional Attitudes Survey (IPAS)
- Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI)

Baseline demographics, information about experiential learning activities, and self-reported grades will be collected from each participating student.

Surveys are issued to participants at 5 points in time during their medical education.

Preliminary Results
As of March 2021, cross-sectional data has been collected from two cohorts of medical students:
- The class of 2024, first year medical students prior to medical school (August 2020)
- The class of 2023, second year medical students completing pre-clerkship phase (January 2021)

Cross-sectional results presented below using independent t-tests performed to assess differences between cohorts listed above and other demographic parameters.

Conclusions
- A method to collect data from the first two cohorts of medical students has succeeded with a response rate of 28% for the class of 2024 and 31% of class of 2023.
- Experience with a free clinic for the underserved was the most meaningful activity in the class of 2023 students (31.5%) compared to the class of 2024, which ranked research project as the most meaningful (28.8%).
- Baseline data has shown differences amongst gender groups consistent with prior studies on attitudes towards service and empathy differences between genders.

Next Steps
- We plan to explore additional methods to recruit more student responses in subsequent cohorts.
- Third cohort will be collected for the Class of 2021 in April 2021.
- Future statistical analysis including subgroup analysis based on types of students’ experiences throughout medical school will be performed.

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