Fostering Ambitions: Understanding Barriers & Motivating Factors for Healthcare Careers at an HSI

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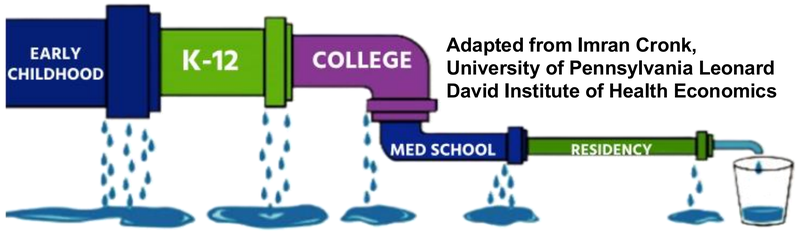
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INTRODUCTION

Diversity in Healthcare Matters: Research continues to show that diversifying the workforce will lead to direct improvements in access to and quality of care for minority populations[1].

- While calls to increase DEI in the U.S. healthcare workforce have persisted for decades, a "leaky pipeline" continues to limit underrepresented students' progress[2].



- In states like New Mexico, where minority groups form the majority, targeted pathways to healthcare education can reduce disparities and strengthen the workforce.

This study examines barriers and motivating factors for New Mexico students pursuing healthcare careers. By analyzing how ethnicity, gender, first-generation status, and socioeconomic background intersect, we aim to explore how these factors shape career choices and access to healthcare education.

SURVEY

Are you 18 years of age or older?
- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

What is your gender?
- ◯ Male (including FTM)
- ◯ Female (including MTF)
- ◯ Non-Binary
- ◯ other

Ethnicity (check all that apply)
- ☐ Hispanic
- ☐ American Indian
- ☐ White
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Black or African American
- ☐ Not listed

What year are you in school?
- ◯ High School
- ◯ 1st year
- ◯ 2nd year
- ◯ 3rd year
- ◯ 4th year or more
- ◯ Graduate School

5. What is/are your biggest concerns in pursuit of your healthcare career (please do not include any identifying information)?

6. What excites you most about pursuing your healthcare career (please do not include any identifying information)?

METHODS

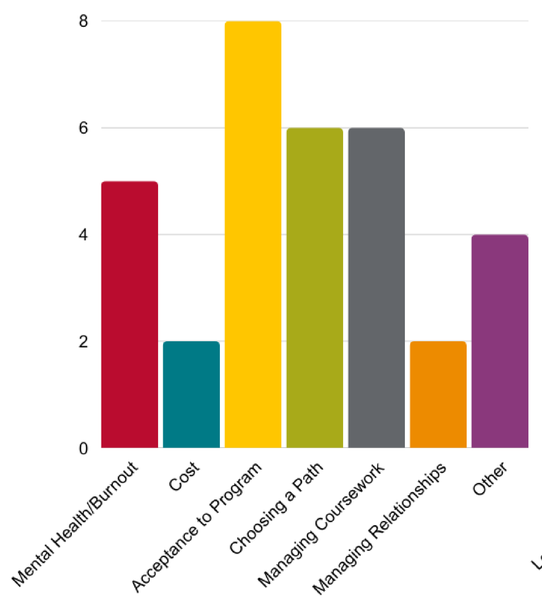
- The survey is distributed through university channels, including undergraduate courses, the UNM Health Professions Symposium, and communication with UNM's Undergraduate Student Body.
- It includes open-ended questions and targets students interested in healthcare careers aged 18 and older.
- Open-ended responses will be analyzed using MAXQDA, a qualitative data analysis software that helps organize and code textual data for deeper insights.

RESULTS

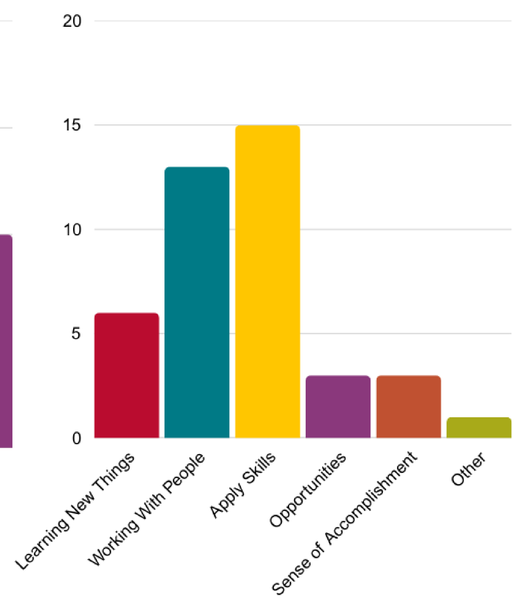
- This project has received IRB approval to conduct a 5-year study.
- Figure 1 shows preliminary data collected from the UNM course UNIV201: "So You Want to Be in Healthcare".

PRELIMINARY DATA

Figure 1: Preliminary Data Collected From a UNM Class Showing Concerns (Left) and Excitements (Right) Students Face When Pursuing Healthcare Careers



Left: Concerns & Barriers for Pursuing Healthcare Careers (n=33)



Right: Motivating Factors for Pursuing Healthcare Careers (n=43)

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

This is an ongoing five-year project that will track trends and evolving experiences of pre-health students over time.

- As the survey continues receiving responses, responses will be processed through systematic coding[3] three times to ensure we have accurately identified themes.
- Recurring themes will be analyzed for frequency and evaluated to develop targeted interventions and programs to promote diverse students' career pathways.
- Future research will assess targeted interventions to address identified barriers and reinforce motivators.

References

1. Cohen J.J., Steinecke A. (2006) Building a Diverse Physician Workforce. JAMA : 296(9):1135–1137.
2. Freeman, B. K., Landry, A., Trevino, R., Grande, D., & Shea, J. A. (2016). Understanding the Leaky Pipeline: Perceived Barriers to Pursuing a Career in Medicine or Dentistry Among Underrepresented-in-Medicine Undergraduate Students. Academic medicine : Journal of the Association of American Medical Colleges, 91(7), 987–993.
3. Maguire, M., & Delahunt, B. (2017). Doing a Thematic Analysis: A Practical, Step-by-Step Guide. ResearchGate, 9(3).

Acknowledgements

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