SUBMISSION PREVIEW

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Factors Associated with Racial and Ethnic Diversity among U.S. Emergency Medicine Residency Programs
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Abstract

Background: Emergency medicine has lower representation of historically under-represented minority (hURMs) physicians compared to other specialties. A 2013 survey of 110 US EM residency programs showed significant variation in the proportion of hURMs, ranging from zero to 39% (median 9%).

Objective: To characterize salient processes, initiatives and institutional cultural factors that enable successful recruitment and retention of hURM residents.

Methods: Based on the 2013 survey, we sampled program directors from EM residency programs in the top and bottom quartiles for proportion of hURM residents. Semi-structured interviews were conducted using a piloted interview guide. Interviews were transcribed, de-identified, iteratively coded and compared to resolve disagreements until data saturation was achieved. Two primary analysts coded the dataset using a qualitative codebook. Inter-coder agreement was set at 80%. Inductive thematic text analysis was conducted.

Results: We completed 25 interviews (16 from top quartile and 9 from bottom quartile programs), representing 20 EM residency programs. Participants in both groups acknowledged challenges to increasing diversity and generally felt that their programs valued diversity. Themes that emerged among top quartile programs included: 1) tangible support for diversity efforts, such as funding, from institutional leaders, 2) processes to intentionally recruit and retain hURM residents and faculty, 3) holistic review of residency applicants, 4) involvement in pipeline programs targeting hURM students, 5) broadly defining diversity to include women, LGBTQI, international medical graduates, etc. and 6) presence of formal and informal mentorship, social and academic support for current hURM residents. Themes that emerged among bottom quartile programs included reduced efficacy or comfort when addressing diversity and the impact of their institution's social, political and geographic landscape on recruitment and retention.

Conclusion: While both groups experienced barriers to diversity, programs with higher proportions of hURM residents implemented deliberate strategies in order to recruit and retain diverse residents. By understanding key characteristics associated with diverse residencies, EM program directors can harness strategies to improve the diversity of their respective programs.

Keywords
Diversity, graduate medical education, residency, qualitative research, equity

Additional Details
Regional Meetings
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Guidelines
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