

The Role of Gender in the Mentorship Preferences of Medical Students

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Introduction

Women in medicine face increased discrimination, sexual harassment, and difficulties maintaining work life balance.¹ Mentorship within the medical field is a vital aspect of the medical education process. Women in medicine have been found to benefit the most from mentorship, which may be due to a mentor's ability to aid in the challenges that women face.² Despite being ubiquitous in undergraduate medical education, mentorship best practices especially for female students, have yet to be developed. Part of the problem lies in the fact that male and females mentees have very different needs and preferences in a mentoring relationship.

Project Aim

The aim of this project is twofold:

1. To explore the mentoring preferences of female medical students.
2. To further examine the role that intended specialty plays in their mentoring preferences, specifically in male-dominated specialties.

Methods

An internet-based survey will be administered to all third- and fourth-year medical students at Wayne State University School of Medicine. Survey items include intended specialty, and Likert-scale questions regarding mentorship preference variables. Students will be asked to rate how important they deem each of these variables in a mentorship relationship. Students will also be asked to identify barriers to mentorship in medical school and describe their ideal and experienced mentorship relationships. This project has been approved by WSU institutional review board.



Figure 1. Mentorship preference variables.

Results

Analysis Plan: Descriptive analysis using the survey data will include Chi-square tests for categorical variables.

- Chi-square test will be performed between male and female medical students with our independent variable being gender and dependent variable being mentorship preferences.
- Chi-square test will be performed between female students interested in male dominated specialties and female students who are not.

Male-dominated specialties will be defined as less than 30% of active physicians are female in particular specialty.

Conclusion

Our results will guide development of effective mentoring program for medical students, especially female medical students, in order to increase career opportunities and ultimately reduce gender-based disparities in the medical field.



Figure 2. Trajectory of Project Aim and Impact

References

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