

Developing a Pipeline for Underrepresented Minorities in Pharmacy: SCOPE Saturday Academy at USC Mann School of Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences

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Objective:

A six-session, educational pipeline program in pharmacy and pharmaceutical sciences was implemented for high school students grades 9 through 12 from underrepresented racial/ethnic minority groups. The objective of this study is to evaluate the impact of this program on the participants' awareness of and interest in pharmacy and pharmaceutical science career pathways.

Methods:

This is a retrospective cohort survey study, administered pre/post of six sessions in 2022 and 2023. The survey was anonymous and consisted of 5 five-point Likert scale questions and one open-ended question. The five-point scale was condensed to a 3-point ordinal scale for data analysis. Pre/post results for each question were analyzed using a two-tailed F-Test for variance, followed by a two sample t-test, assuming either equal or unequal variances. Qualitative data was analyzed using inductive thematic analysis. IRB approval was obtained prior to initiating the study.

Results:

Thirty-five of 47 students (74%) and 23 of 47 students (49%) completed pre/post surveys in the 2022 and 2023 cohorts, respectively. Participants reported a 29% increase in confidence in their knowledge of career options in pharmacy and pharmaceutical sciences ($p<.0001$), and a 29% increase in their confidence in knowledge of the steps needed to pursue a career in pharmacy and pharmaceutical sciences ($p<.001$). Participants reported the following themes as areas of growth and/or learning from the program (1) pharmacy and pharmaceutical science career pathways (65%), (2) professional development (40%), (3) drug discovery and development (35%), and (4) pharmacist roles and responsibilities (40%).

Conclusions:

Pipeline programs such as the one implemented and described in this study can increase awareness of and interest in career pathways in pharmacy and pharmaceutical sciences for high school students from underrepresented minority groups.