CASPA Applicant/Matriculation Trends 2007-2021:  
Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and Economically Disadvantaged Status

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Purpose

- As Physician Assistant/Physician Associate (PA) programs strive to improve diversity, equity and inclusion and streamline admissions processes, a review of previous applicant and matriculant data is essential.
- Prior analysis of CASPA data show stagnation in student diversity.
- This study examines CASPA data over the first 20 years, focusing on applicant and matriculant race, ethnicity, gender, and economically disadvantaged status.
- Findings have the potential to inform admissions practices that promote increased diversity in PA programs nationwide.

Methods

- This is a retrospective analysis of CASPA data from all CASPA participating programs from 2007 to 2021.
- Beginning in 2007, the online CASPA Admissions Portal linked matriculant and applicant data.
- Trends in both applicants and matriculants in the areas of race, ethnicity, gender, and economically disadvantaged status were analyzed using descriptive statistics.
- Logistic regression models will be used to assess factors that may be associated with odds of matriculation among diverse applicants.

Results

- Examining race and ethnicity, between 2007 and 2021, the percentage of applicants and matriculants who identified as non-Hispanic white declined from 76.34% to 55.09% and from 76.46% to 66.92% respectively.
- Black/Black American applicants and matriculants decreased from 2007 to 2016 but saw a steady increase from 2017 to 2021, with the percentage of matriculants increasing slightly from 3.1% to 4.5%.
- Hispanic/Latino and matriculants increased from 6.94% to 13.42% and 5.79% to 9.71% respectively.
- White matriculants exceeded the percentage of white applicants each year; the opposite occurred for all other races/ethnicities.
- From 2010 to 2018, an increasing percentage of applicants did not report race or ethnicity, with a significant decrease in non-reported data starting in 2019.

- In the analysis of applicant and matriculation trends in gender, the percentages of male and female applicants and matriculants remained relatively constant from 2007-2021.
- There was a slight increase in female applicants and matriculants and a slight decrease in male applicants and matriculants in the 2019-2021 application cycles, which was statistically significant.

- Between 2007 and 2021, the percentage of applicants who reported economic disadvantage increased, with the highest percentage increase in 2021.
- Each year, the percentage of matriculants who reported economic disadvantage was lower than the percentage of applicants reporting economic disadvantage; and the percentage of non-matriculants who reported economic disadvantage was higher than the percentage of applicants reporting economic disadvantage.
- These results suggest that, while more individuals who reported economic disadvantage were applying to PA school, economic factors were a barrier to matriculation.

Race and Ethnicity as a Percentage of Total Applicants and Matriculants (2007-2021)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Applicants</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black/Black American</th>
<th>Hispanic/Latino</th>
<th>Other</th>
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Conclusion

- The PA profession continues to face challenges recruiting underrepresented minorities, male applicants, and economically disadvantaged applicants to the profession, which has implications for caring for and treating diverse populations.
- This twenty-year comprehensive analysis will benefit the profession by providing historical information to faculty and policy makers to use as a basis for developing and evaluating future admissions policies and practices.

References


Yale School of Medicine | Physician Assistant Online Program