



# Examining the Effects of Criminal Justice Education Among Dual Degree Physician Assistant Students at Touro University California

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## Introduction

- Over **5 million individuals** are currently incarcerated or under the supervision of the criminal justice system
- Living in carceral settings is associated with increased rates of hypertension, diabetes, asthma, HIV, hepatitis C, tuberculosis and substance use
- Healthcare provider stigma leads to **poorer health outcomes**
- Stigma is heightened when healthcare providers believe a condition is “deserved” due to a patient’s lifestyle
- Touro University California (TUC) is the first program to offer a public health concentration in Health Equity and Criminal Justice
- TUC is the **only PA program** that requires a dual public health degree

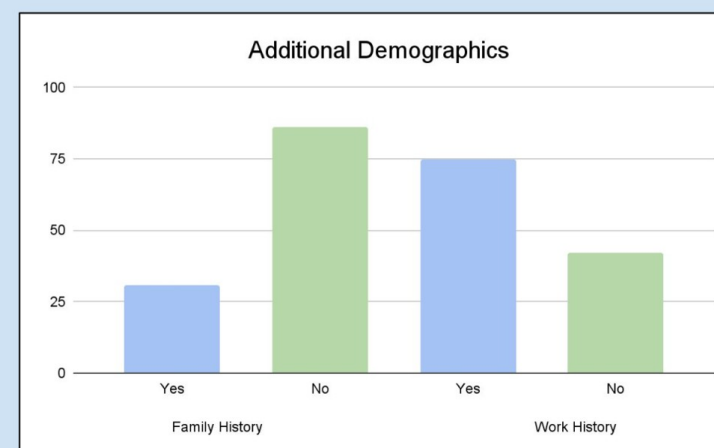
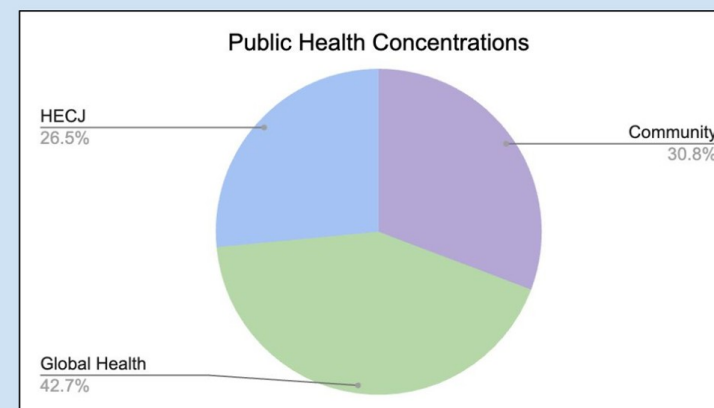
## Objectives

- Test the association between PH concentration and stigmatization of individuals with a history of criminal legal involvement amongst PA students at TUC

## Methods

- Cross sectional study collecting primary data
  - IRB approval obtained June 2022
- Adapted three validated survey scales and scoring systems
  - 18 Likert scale questions analyzing personal and professional stigma
- Inclusion criteria: PA students matriculating 2019-2021 (n=117)

## Results



Education	Composite Stigma Score		Min	Max	P-value
	Mean	Std. Dev			
HECJ (n=31)	35.09	6.16	22	47	0.00
Non-HECJ (n=86)	43.48	6.66	27	57	
All Students (n=117)	41.25	7.50	22	57	

## Results Continued

HECJ vs non-HECJ (n=117)	
Unadjusted	-8.41
(se)	(1.37)
Adjusted*	-7.56
(se)	(1.42)

\*Adjusted for gender, race, first generation graduate student, family history of incarceration, previous work history with individuals formerly incarcerated

Impression:

- ❖ **Negative association** between HECJ enrollment and stigma score

## Discussion

- This pilot study advanced our understanding of PA student stigmatization of individuals with a history of criminal legal involvement
- There’s a need to refine and validate the tool for measuring stigma – some questions were too open to interpretation
- Recommend repeating survey before and after HECJ classes to assess if exposure was causative of lower stigma scores

## Conclusion

- This study found a positive correlation between decreased stigma scores and HECJ students
- Supports evidence that clinical programs are bypassing a critical patient population
- More research is needed to determine how the education affected the attitudes and behaviors of the students

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