

From Aspiration to Matriculation: Enhancing Pre-PA Applicants' Success

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Background

- Increasing diversity in the Physician Assistant (PA) profession is critical for advancing health equity.
- Despite its importance, individuals from underrepresented groups remain a small fraction of the PA workforce.
- A national mentorship program was designed to address these disparities, providing comprehensive support to aspiring PA students from underrepresented backgrounds.
- This study evaluates the program's preliminary impact of the EDGE-PA pilot program (2022-2024) using a mixed-methods approach.

Methods

Design:

- Concurrent mixed-methods design to evaluate program outcomes

Participants:

- 35 Black men (2 Hispanic Black); Age 25-54

Quantitative Data Collection:

- Surveys: 64% response rate
- Measured variables:
 - Perceived benefits of resources (e.g., CASPA reviews, mock interviews, mentorship)
 - Program satisfaction
 - Data analysis using SPSS

Qualitative Data Collection:

- Structured interviews (n= 22 participants)
- Focus areas:
 - Program experiences
 - Perceived challenges
 - Recommendations for improvement
 - Manual thematic analysis to identify patterns and key insights

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Results: Program Success

Impact of Resources

	Helpful	Not Helpful	N/A
CASPA Review	74.3%	8.6%	17.1%
Mentorship	71.4%	20%	8.6%
Personal Statement Review	77.1%	11.4%	11.4%
Admissions Meetings	82.9%	5.7%	11.4%
Guest Speakers	91.4%	2.9%	5.7%
Mock Interviews	71.4%	2.9%	25.7%

Participant Perceptions

Positive Experiences

- Mentorship built confidence and provided tailored guidance
- Systematic support for CASPA and interviews mitigated the feeling of intimidation
- Program fostered confidence and a sense of community
- Program increases participants' persistence and resilience

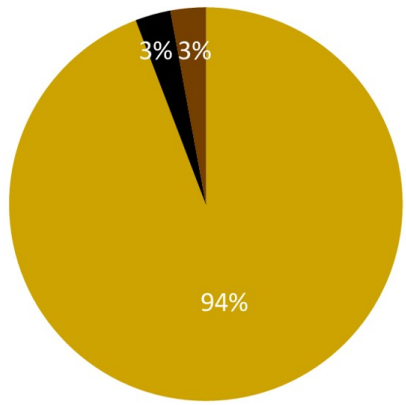
Challenges/Suggestions

- Improved program structure
- Expanded mock interviews
- Improved mentor availability and accountability
- Provide financial aid for interview travel, relocation, and pre-application exam preparation

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Student Satisfaction



■ Satisfied ■ Neutral ■ Unsatisfied

Discussion/Conclusion

- Our study underscores the effectiveness of comprehensive support programs in improving PA school application outcomes among individuals from underrepresented groups.
- Key components, such as mentorship, personalized application assistance, and structured preparation, are instrumental in fostering success.
- Expanding such initiatives and addressing identified gaps could enhance diversity within the PA profession and contribute to broader health equity goals.

Interview and Matriculation Success

