

Student Identification of Barriers to Care for Medically Underserved Patients Following an Introductory Pharmacy Practice Experience

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Background

- Early reflection on identifying and using culturally sensitive practices sets a foundation for students as they advance through the curriculum¹
- After a 40-hour community pharmacy introductory pharmacy practice experience (IPPE), first-year (P1) students completed reflections that included describing an experience related to medically underserved populations that impacted them

Objective

To determine P1 student identification of barriers to care among medically underserved populations during an IPPE

Methods

IPPE Experience

- P1 Students completed a 40-hour IPPE in a community pharmacy setting
- Underserved populations were defined using the HHS definitions²

Reflection Completion

- After their rotation, students reflected on:
 - 1) Populations they interacted with
 - 2) Experiences related to a medically underserved population

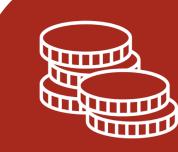
Content Analysis

- 2 years of P1 IPPEs included
 - Spring 2023 and Spring 2024
- Research team developed codebook
- Coding was conducted using Dedoose
 - 24.4% of reflections were coded in duplicate to ensure inter-rater reliability
- Themes were identified related to barriers to care among medically underserved populations

Results

- 192 students completed reflections
- 140 (72.9%) students identified 1 or more specific medically underserved population(s)
- 102 (53.4%) students identified at least one barrier to care

Figure 1. Student identified barriers to care



Low Socioeconomic Status N = 47 (24.5%)

"Patients who are restricted financially and leave the hospital without their discharge medications are unlikely to get them filled elsewhere, significantly increasing the risk of readmission."

Non-English Speaking

N = 22 (11.5%)

"The patient could not speak English

and relied on his daughter [to

translate]... but not everything in

English could be translated to Spanish.

The differences in language made this

issue much harder to solve because

there wasn't clear communication."

Disabilities N = 14 (7.3%)

"[This experience] allowed me to directly witness the difficulties a deaf patient encounters... If the patient was prescribed new medication and was unable to read lips, the counseling process would become much more difficult and concerning"

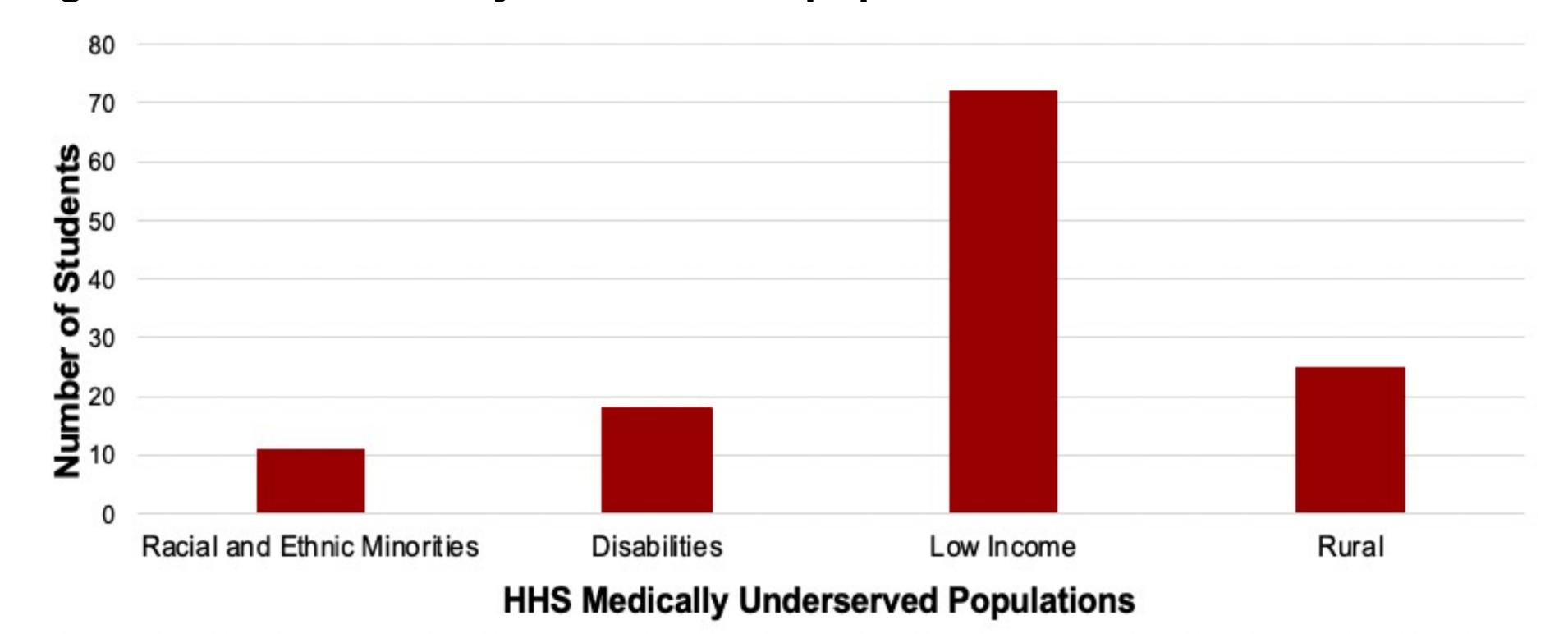
Barriers to Care

Rurality N = 18 (9.4%)

"Many patients pay out of pocket [for medications and durable medical supplies] because where they live is rural and would spend that extra money driving to somewhere insurance covers."

Other barriers to care identified included low health literacy, immigration, and discrimination

Figure 2. HHS medically underserved populations² identified in reflections



Discussion

- P1 students' IPPE reflections demonstrates student understanding and awareness of the barriers to care that medically underserved populations experience
- This assignment can be broadly applied to a variety of pharmacy programs to assess student identification of barriers to care for medically underserved populations

Additional Questions to Explore

- How does student understanding of barriers to care impact student provision of care to medically underserved populations?
- Does the proportion of medically underserved patients at the pharmacy influence student observations and reflections?

Future Directions

- Revise reflection prompts for clarity
- Creation of preceptor development materials to support teaching about medically underserved populations²
- Curriculum revisions to better prepare students to identify medically underserved populations

References

- Drame, et al. Strategies for Incorporating Health Disparities and Cultural Competency Training into the Pharmacy Curriculum and Co-curriculum. Am J Pharm Educ. 2022. doi: 10.5688/ajpe8631
- 2. US Department of Health and Human Services. Serving vulnerable and underserved populations.

https://www.hhs.gov/guidance/sites/default/files/hhs-guidance-documents/006_Serving_Vulnerable_and_Underserved_Populations.pdf

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