

## **Abstract 7**

### **Title: Performing Under Pressure: Varsity Athletes Excel in Medical School**

*Background:* The admissions process for medical school relies on objective and subjective measures of personal achievement, and selecting successful medical students is a daunting task for admission committees. While there is a significant body of literature examining MCAT scores and undergraduate grade point average (GPA) with medical school performance, there is a paucity of research on impact of specific student accomplishments on future performance.

*Objectives:* We hypothesize participation in a varsity collegiate sport will correlate with higher performance during medical school.

*Methods/Design:* A retrospective review of four medical school classes at a single institution was completed. Each student's admission application was examined for at least 1 year of participation in a varsity-level sport at their respective undergraduate institution.

*Results:* A total of 62 athletes (16.36%) were identified out of 441 total students. Multiple medical school performance metrics were obtained for each student. Results: There was no difference in MCAT scores between athletes and non-athlete medical students. There was a significant difference in Step 1, Step 2 CK, NBME shelf exams, cumulative year 3 performance, and AOA status with the athletes outperforming their peers.

*Conclusions:* Students who participate in collegiate varsity athletics excel in medical school. One explanation for this finding may be participation in high-stakes athletic training and competition results in development of specific skills beneficial in medical school. These skills may include: receptiveness to criticism, time management, resiliency, team participation, and performing under pressure. Additional research is needed to determine the exact cause for these results so medical educators can utilize this knowledge to better prepare all students for the rigors of medical school. The authors are currently planning to perform qualitative research as an MSRP project during summer 2019 to engage in focused guided interviews with student athletes to identify possible explanations for these data.