

Medical Education Research

“Health Equity Research Opportunities (HERO) Workshops:

Training Graduate Students in Health Disparities Translational and Clinical Research”

Authors: Y. Montez Lane-Brown, Ronny A. Bell, Brenda Latham-Sadler, Bernard Roper and Allyn C. Howlett

Rationale and Need: Underrepresented racial and ethnic minority (URM) scholars conduct the majority of minority-related health research. We **proposed that increasing the knowledge and skills to address health disparities would facilitate student engagement in health disparities research.**

Methods: Using an inter-professional educational approach, the Maya Angelou Center for Health Equity Research and Training Subcommittee developed and delivered the **Health Equity Research Opportunities (HERO) program** to expose MS in Biomedical Sciences graduate students to key concepts in research on health disparities and interventional strategies to promote health equity. The Maya Angelou Center for Health Equity HERO program consisted of three, two-day workshops for graduate students entering the MS in Biomedical Sciences. *Topics in Translational and Educational Research* introduced students to translational research, clinical trials, qualitative research, inter-professional research, statistical approaches and written and oral communication of research. *Detecting and Understanding Health Disparities* concentrated on landmark reports, measurement and social determinants of health disparities, ethics in human subjects research, healthcare reform, cultural competency, and bias in healthcare. *Promoting Health Equity* covered organizational and community interventions, service learning in education, policy interventions, community engagement and community-based participatory research. Workshops incorporated active learning approaches including interactive discussion and activities, and small group development of presentations and written reports. Students were engaged with under-represented minority faculty throughout the HERO workshop series.

Results: Consenting participants completed an IRB-approved online survey to obtain feedback on workshop effectiveness. Knowledge and skills were assessed using *Before* and *After* retrospective questions. Results from N = 26 participants (87% response rate) showed that MS students increased in knowledge in inter-professional research, social determinants of health, and policy interventions to address health disparities. Interest in health disparities research was apparent from a retrospective analysis that 37% of participants chose MS projects related to health disparities.

Conclusions: Participation in health equity training early in the student’s educational trajectory can increase knowledge and facilitate interest in addressing health disparities. The HERO workshops showed students how to apply research to promoting health equity, and encouraged students from diverse backgrounds to develop an interest in health disparities research.

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