The KP-Mare Island Junior Health Academy: A Pilot Pipeline-to-Healthcare Program for 7th and 8th Graders

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INTRODUCTION

- U.S. healthcare often does not represent the populations it serves, which can lead to mistrust and have detrimental effects on patient outcomes such as maternal morbidity and mortality.
- Groups underrepresented in medicine (UIM) (which includes non-dominant racial/ ethnic groups, religions, sexualités, and gender identities) often face substantial disparities in healthcare.
- One method to ameliorate these healthcare discrepancies may lie in improving representation of UIM groups within the workforce.
- Pipeline programs focused on young UIM students have shown increased college and medical school acceptance rates.

OBJECTIVES

- Increase awareness of and interest in healthcare-related fields in 7th and 8th graders belonging to UIM groups.
- Doing so may promote increased DEI in future generations of healthcare providers while also improving trust in healthcare systems and health outcomes for marginalized patient groups.

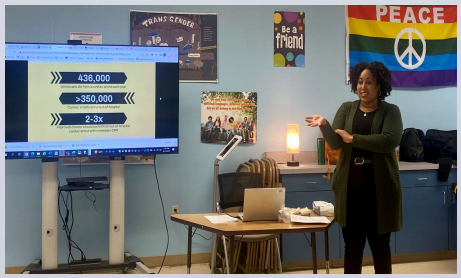
METHODS

- KP Napa-Solano Family Medicine Residency Program partnered with Mare Island Health and Fitness Academy to empower K-8th grade students to make healthy decisions, mainly pertaining to diet and physical activity.
- Created the "Junior Health Academy" (JHA) pathway program comprised of 7th-8th grade underrepresented students interested in healthcare.
- Junior Health Ambassadors (JHA's) receive additional sessions that expose them to health promotion topics and roles in healthcare.
- JHA's help the KP team facilitate the diet and physical activity sessions for the K-6th grade students.

METHODS (cont.)

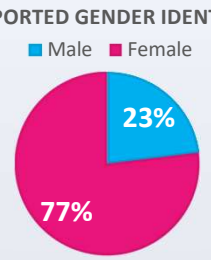
- Under the guidance of the Research Project Manager and a family medicine physician at KP Vallejo, a public health intern created facilitator guides, PowerPoint/Google Slides presentations, and activities for five in-person sessions throughout the spring semester:
  - Health Promotion
  - Roles in Healthcare
  - Heart and Lung Exam
  - Common Medical Problems and Field Skills
  - Mock Case Demonstrations

- Each month, a medical student or resident delivers a 50-minute session to students after school.
- Sessions utilize a variety of teaching strategies including direct instruction, interactive group discussions, activities, and demonstrations.
- At the end of each session, voluntary oral feedback is collected from the students and any additional school staff in attendance (e.g., the principal).
- Students completed a six-question survey assessing their personal health, career aspirations, reasons for participating, and their level of excitement about working in healthcare.



RESULTS

Figure 1A & 1B. Gender and racial/ethnic demographics of the students enrolled in the program (N=13)



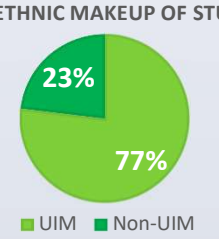
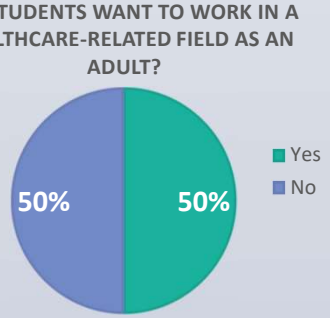


Figure 2. Pre-test survey results of students on personal health, interest in working in health-related field, reasons for participating in the program (N=12).



DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS

Long-term effects of the JHA program may be part of a broader efforts to increase UIM representation in a step-wise fashion:

- As students belonging to UIM groups find increased interest in healthcare-related fields, they may pursue secondary educational opportunities that lead to those fields (e.g., vocational school, graduate school).
- As UIM groups find increased representation in education, training, and the workforce, more individuals belonging to UIM groups may obtain leadership positions within local, national, and international institutions (e.g., committee members, program directors, and department chairs).
- As UIM groups find greater representation in the workforce, structural health disparities faced by UIM groups may be dismantled with greater effort, and patients who also belong to UIM groups may gain improved care (both real and perceived), health outcomes, and patient satisfaction.

Pending completion of all five sessions and collecting post-test data from participants, the JHA may be a useful pilot program in increasing awareness of and interest in healthcare careers within UIM groups. Evaluation data will guide future iterations of the program and integrations into other ongoing and future projects at the local partnered school.

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DISCLOSURES & CONTACT INFO

The authors report no financial disclosures.

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Interprofessional Research Week questions can be submitted to the above email addresses, via Google Forms (https://forms.gle/xge6fDGWcoKMDwhk7), or by scanning the following QR Code: