

Health Professions Education Institute (HPEI)

Abstract

Title: New Otolaryngology-Head & Neck Surgery Mentorship Program for Pre-Clinical Wake Forest Medical Students

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WORKS IN PROGRESS:

Background/Needs Assessment: Without prior knowledge or interest, many medical students may not have the opportunity for formal exposure to the field of Otolaryngology-Head & Neck Surgery (Oto-HNS). Additionally, Oto-HNS is not a very diverse specialty, as only 30% of Otolaryngologists are women, men comprise 92% of professors, and African Americans comprise only 2.3% of all trainees¹. As such, students from diverse backgrounds who are often underrepresented in many surgical subspecialties may overlook Oto-HNS as a potential career path. Due to the increasingly competitive nature of the Oto-HNS, lack of diversity has the potential to become even more problematic.

Objectives: One goal is to help mitigate the issue of diversity by establishing an immersive Oto-HNS experience for pre-clinical Wake Forest medical students of diverse backgrounds. Special consideration will be given to students during the application process who have historically been underrepresented in the specialty. A second goal is the early introduction to Oto-HNS to further their education, expose them to multiple faculty members and residents, and to increase their network for possible research opportunities. A third goal is to provide students with a faculty mentor who will guide them throughout the program, through their clinical years and residency applications, and beyond.

Methods/Description of Program: Each year, two first year medical students from diverse backgrounds will be selected via a written application process. During the six-week program, students will spend one week in different Oto-HNS subspecialties at the Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center. They will spend time observing faculty and residents on rounds, in clinics, in ORs, and in audiology/speech pathology/vestibular testing. They will be exposed to patient care, operations, networking, research opportunities, and more. Students will be evaluated on attendance, clinical performance, professionalism, teamwork, and a formal case presentation.

Anticipated Results/Evaluation Plan: Students will complete an exit questionnaire and will be followed through their Match Day and beyond, to determine the impact of the program on their education and career choices compared to non-participating students. We anticipate that students will: (1) learn an enormous amount of medical information, (2) be exposed to patients and the surgical environment, and (3) greatly benefit from having a mentor. Longitudinal study concerning their ultimate career choices will serve as one way to measure our goal of increasing diversity in Oto-HNS.

Next Steps: We hope the program will become a model to motivate other medical educators and institutions to initiate similar programs in order to inspire a new generation of Otolaryngologist-Head & Neck Surgeons to become passionate about education, surgery, diversity, early introduction, and mentorship.

Works Cited

1. Rapoport SK. Changing Biases. ENT Today, November 2021;16(1):21-22