Children's Hospital of Philadelphia PolicyLab

Diversity in the Pediatric Research Workforce: A Scoping Review of the Literature

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The purpose of this scoping review is to determine trends in racial and ethnic representation, identify barriers and facilitators to greater diversity, and assess strategies and interventions to advance diversity among those in the pediatric research workforce in the U.S. We conducted a scoping review of PubMed supplemented with the authors' personal library of papers published from January 1, 2010, to December 31, 2021. To be eligible, papers had to provide original data, be published in English, report information from a U.S. healthcare institution, and report on outcomes of interest relevant to the child health field. The diversity of faculty has modestly increased over the past decade but reflects a worsening representation compared to overall population trends. This slow increase reflects a loss of diverse faculty and has been referred to as a "leaky pipeline." Strategies to plug the "leaky pipeline" include greater investments in pipeline programs, implementation of holistic review and implicit bias training, development of mentoring and faculty programs targeted to diverse faculty and trainees, alleviation of burdensome administrative tasks, and creation of more inclusive institutional environments. Modest improvements in the racial and ethnic diversity of the pediatric research workforce were identified. However, this reflects worsening overall representation given changing U.S. population demographics. IMPACT: Racial and ethnic diversity in the pediatric research workforce has shown modest increases but worsening overall representation. This review identified barriers and facilitators at the intrapersonal, interpersonal, and institutional levels that impact BIPOC trainees and faculty career advancement. Strategies to improve the pathway for BIPOC individuals include greater investments in pipeline and educational programs, implementation of holistic review admissions and bias training, institution of mentoring and sponsorship, alleviation of burdensome administrative responsibilities, and creation of inclusive institutional climates. Future studies should rigorously test the effects of interventions and strategies designed to improve diversity in the pediatric research workforce.

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