



Early Exposure Day Camp and the Impact on Student Career Choices

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SCHOOL OF
PHARMACY

BACKGROUND

- Due to non-exposure, few relatable role models, and limited career mentoring access many pharmacy school applicants are majority students.
- Decreased minority students = negative impact on patient and healthcare provider trust within their relationships.
- Secondly, this impacts pharmacy institutions because they often lose out on outstanding possible candidates. Talented, high-potential students who might excel in the profession often times don't even apply to Pharmacy school simply because they were never given the chance to learn about the career.
- Early career exposure is a huge factor in why this is challenging but rewarding because exposure is modifiable and can be implemented immediately and with measurable results.
- My project - Pharmacy career workshop for students. I addressed this issue by developing an early exposure, one-day, free of cost Pharmacy Career Day Camp.
- Interactive activities, presentations from local pharmacists, and opportunities for mentorship, this program aimed to open doors that minority students may not have even known existed to them.

METHODS

- Descriptive, pre-post observational program evaluation - One-day Pharmacy Career Camp (March 7, 2026; St. Louis, MO)
- Target population: minority middle school students (grades 5-8)
- Recruitment via local schools and community outreach flyers (31 registered; 20 attended and completed program)
- Parental consent obtained; no IRB required
- Intervention included: Pharmacist-led presentations, hands on activities simulating pharmacy practice labs, and panel Q&A sessions
- Pre- and post-program surveys administered
- Outcomes measured: Knowledge of pharmacy profession and interest in pharmacy careers
- Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics (percentages)

RESULTS

- 20 students participated; 100% completed pre- and post-surveys
- Pre- survey: 4 (20%) out of the 20 students had interest in becoming pharmacist
- Post- survey : 12 (60%) out of the 20 students had interest in becoming pharmacist
- **Baseline findings:** Limited knowledge of the pharmacy profession, most students associated pharmacists primarily with dispensing medications, and students had minimal awareness of diverse pharmacy career pathways
- **Post-program findings:** Increased awareness of multiple pharmacy specialties (clinical, ambulatory care, managed care, nuclear, understanding of pharmacists' roles in patient care
- **Engagement and learning:** High participation in hands-on activities and group discussions and high interaction with pharmacist speakers enhanced learning experience
- **Overall impact:** The program effectively expanded students' perception of the pharmacy profession
Descriptive analysis performed; no inferential statistical testing conducted

EXCEPTIONAL OUTCOMES

- 100% participant survey completion rate
- Demonstrated increase in awareness of **non-traditional pharmacy roles**
- High levels of participation in **hands-on and interactive learning activities**
- Positive learning environment that promoted curiosity
- Increased student confidence and empowerment

LESSONS LEARNED

- Early exposure increases awareness and interest in pharmacy careers
- Hands-on learning is more effective than lectures
- Mentorship and representation strongly influence student engagement
- Early exposure helps students feel confident and capable of pursuing careers in healthcare
- Building supportive connections in learning environments encourages students to ask questions and explore careers they might not have previously considered

FUTURE PLANS

- Implementation across multiple regions or with larger participant groups
- Additional data collection methods
- Long term impact tracking
- Implementation of a control group

CONCLUSION

- This project demonstrates that early exposure to pharmacy careers can play a meaningful role in shaping students' understanding of and interest in the field.
- Through interactive activities, direct engagement with practicing pharmacists, and hands-on learning experiences, students were able to develop a broader and more accurate understanding of the diverse roles pharmacists play within healthcare.
- Additionally, the program highlighted the value of incorporating experiential learning into career education.