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Research Posters Submission Form
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TITLE OF PRESENTATION:

Medical Mastermind Community: A pilot project to recruit disadvantaged students into careers in medicine.

PURPOSE OF RESEARCH: This study is an innovative approach to recruiting a diverse physician workforce through tele-mentorship. Undergraduate premedical students were recruited to even physician distribution to physician shortage areas. As of September 30, 2009, there were 65 million people living in Health Provider Shortage Areas, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Currently 20% of Americans live in rural areas, but only 9% of physicians live there. Unfortunately, current models of minority recruitment are not projected to increase minority representation during the current upsurge of medical student and resident slots.

METHODOLOGY: A list of colleges and universities located in federally-designated health provider shortage areas and medically underserved areas was compiled and their health career advisers were contacted. All students interested in a career as a physician were invited to participate in a 1-year, tele-conference style mentorship program which included didactic lectures about the field of medicine, academic resources and study skills training, access to physicians and current medical students, and group discussions. Pre- and post-intervention outcome measures included matriculation into medical school, perceived level of stress and burnout, grades, and preferred setting of medical practice. This study was approved by the institutional review board at the American Institutes for Research.

RESULTS: Sixty students were enrolled, provided informed consent, and mentored for one year. Forty eight (80%) of the students responded to the one-year follow up survey. Ten did not respond and two decided to change majors. Forty one (85.4%) reported matriculation into medical school. At baseline, 36 (75%) of students reported high levels of perceived stress and burnout. Post-intervention, 14 (29.2%) reported high levels of perceived stress and burnout and 3 (6.3%) reported moderate levels of stress and burnout. Average Medical College Admission Test sub-section scores rose from 23.6 to 27.9. Seventeen (35.4%) of students reported factors that heavily influence their practice setting included communities that have doctor shortages and personal health care experiences.

CONCLUSIONS: This study demonstrates that remotely operated mentorship programs can be effective in medical school recruitment of target populations. It also supports earlier work that suggested that personal demographics and formative youthful experiences of physicians is one factor in predicting their preferred practice setting.