

Peer-led webinar to support LGBTQ+ students applying to medical school during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Background

- Students under-represented in medicine (URiM) are more likely to have negative experiences in pre-medical coursework, with advisers → decreased interest in premedical tracks, poorer academic performance¹
- Sexual and gender minority (SGM) students diverse group omitted from URiM designation, but face challenges, barriers²
- COVID-19 pandemic interrupted pre-med events

Objectives

- To better understand the concerns of SGM applicants to medical school
- To examine the efficacy of a virtual intervention addressing concerns

Methods

- Webinar with medical students, admissions leadership offered twice (2019, 2020)
- Pre/post surveys administered before/after
- Statistical analyses, visualizations performed in R
- Thematic analysis used to evaluate comments

Acknowledgements

MCM funded by F30MH118762

“I feel more **confident** about my **queer identity** as being an asset! Hearing everyone talk about their experiences about being queer and matriculating was extremely **validating and encouraging.**”

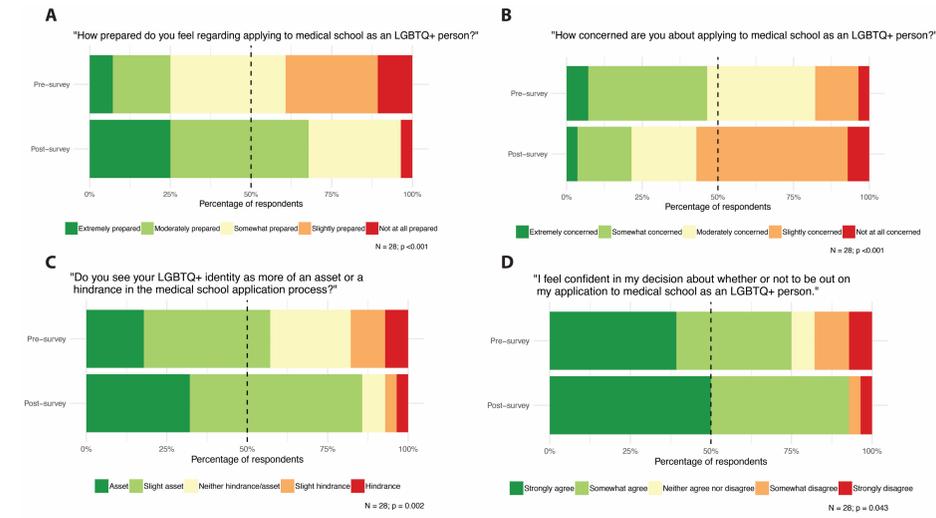
“I want to go to a school that **emphasizes health care for disadvantaged and underrepresented populations** including LGBTQ+ people.”

"Seeing and hearing the stories of all these students who've gone through the process **unapologetically themselves out and proud** gives me **so much hope** about finding a school that will **accept me for who I am.**"

PRE	POST
geographical location	
misgendering	feeling visible as LGBTQ+ applicants
concerns about future positions/jobs or Match	AMCAS disadvantaged statement
finding safe schools or safe programs	financial need, aid, or support
relevance and impact of LGBTQ+ identity on applications	validated and more confident
uncertainty about whether or not to be out, concerns about being outed, not having a choice	importance of community when considering their identities as applicants
fear of discrimination from admissions committees	
concerns about applying non-binary/transgender	interview appearance
finding a supportive community	webinar was helpful
admissions committee lacking understanding or interpretation of application	framing essays about identity, diversity, and adversity
fear of discrimination during application process due to identity	
LGBTQ+ identity provides diverse perspective as applicant	
increased representation in medicine related to feelings about LGBTQ+ identities on apps	
uncertain about how LGBTQ+ identity would impact applications	educational or curricular priorities
experiences related to LGBTQ+ identity	

Results

- 60 participants; 49 (82%) responded to survey, 28 (57%) completed both pre/post



- **Themes:** Perceptions about LGBTQ+ identity, Concerns about applying, Pre-med advising

Discussion/Limitations

- SGM students face unique challenges during the application process
- Many students have concerns about being “out” during the application process
- Student-led webinar may be more approachable, accessible than on-campus activities
- Small sample size

Conclusions/Next Steps

- Student-led webinar improves SGM pre-medical students’ confidence in, perceptions of medical school admissions process
- Continuing to offer webinar, develop pre-med peer mentorship programming

References

1) Alexander et al. How leaky is the health career pipeline? Minority student achievement in college gateway courses. Acad Med. 2009 Jun 1;84(6):797-802; Barr et al. The leaky pipeline: Factors associated with early decline in interest in premedical studies among underrepresented minority undergraduate students. Acad Med. 2008 May 1;83(5):503-11; 2) Dimant et al. Experiences of transgender and gender nonbinary medical students and physicians. Transgender health. 2019 Sep 1;4(1):209-16; Butler et al. “Progress in medicine is slower to happen”: qualitative insights into how trans and gender nonconforming medical students navigate cisnormative medical cultures at Canadian training programs. Acad Med. 2019 Nov 1;94(11):1757-65; Mansh et al. Sexual and gender minority identity disclosure during undergraduate medical education: “in the closet” in medical school. Acad Med. 2015 May 1;90(5):634-44.