

Public Abstract

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Title:Challenges and Successes of African American Males in the Health Professions.

The present literature review examines the factors that contribute to the underrepresentation of African American men in the field of medicine in an attempt to underscore the need to increase their numbers in the health professions workforce. The review explores literature pertaining to historical perspectives in medicine for African Americans at the turn of the 20th century and early in the 21st, touching on events such as the Flexner Report and its negative impact on medical education for African Americans. The review further investigates disparities between African Americans and Whites in healthcare service delivery as evidenced by disease prognoses and outcomes for African Americans, and the fact that African American physicians choose to practice in underserved areas where they are mostly trusted by patients of similar race and ethnicity. Moreover, the review examines the benefits associated with increasing the number of African American men in medical schools and the physician workforce, and the impact for society at large. Literature on efforts to increase participation of African American men in an increasing number of pipeline programs is also considered. Research on challenges and barriers to African American men succeeding in pre-higher education, college and graduate school is reviewed, followed by accounts of how those who are managing to matriculate to medical school had previously succeeded in high school and college despite educational disparities, financial obstacles, and racial microaggressions. Finally, the review emphasizes the importance of exposing Black boys to the medical field early on, preferably during high school, the role of mentorship in the education process, and the need to have medical student voices on strategies they employed for success in matriculating to medical school represented in the literature, to effect positive change for others to follow.