



EXPLORING BARRIERS FACED BY PRE-HEALTH VOLUNTEERS AT A STUDENT RUN FREE CLINIC

Juan Galindez Mingo, MS4 & Kari Mader, MD, MPH

University of Colorado School of Medicine



Introduction

- DAWN is a student run free clinic (SRFC) reliant on pre-health volunteers to help provide care to Aurora's underserved and uninsured community.
- Anecdotally, DAWN pre-Health volunteers have faced challenges in gaining access to health professional programs.
- There is a significant gap in published data that focuses on characterizing barriers faced specifically by pre-health volunteers at SRFCs.
- In order to honor these volunteers' commitment to the health of their community, we set out to better characterize their barriers in hopes of supporting their future career aspirations.

Study Goals

Collect and analyze demographic data depicting DAWN's pre-health volunteer cohort

Identify and characterize barriers faced by DAWN pre-health volunteers

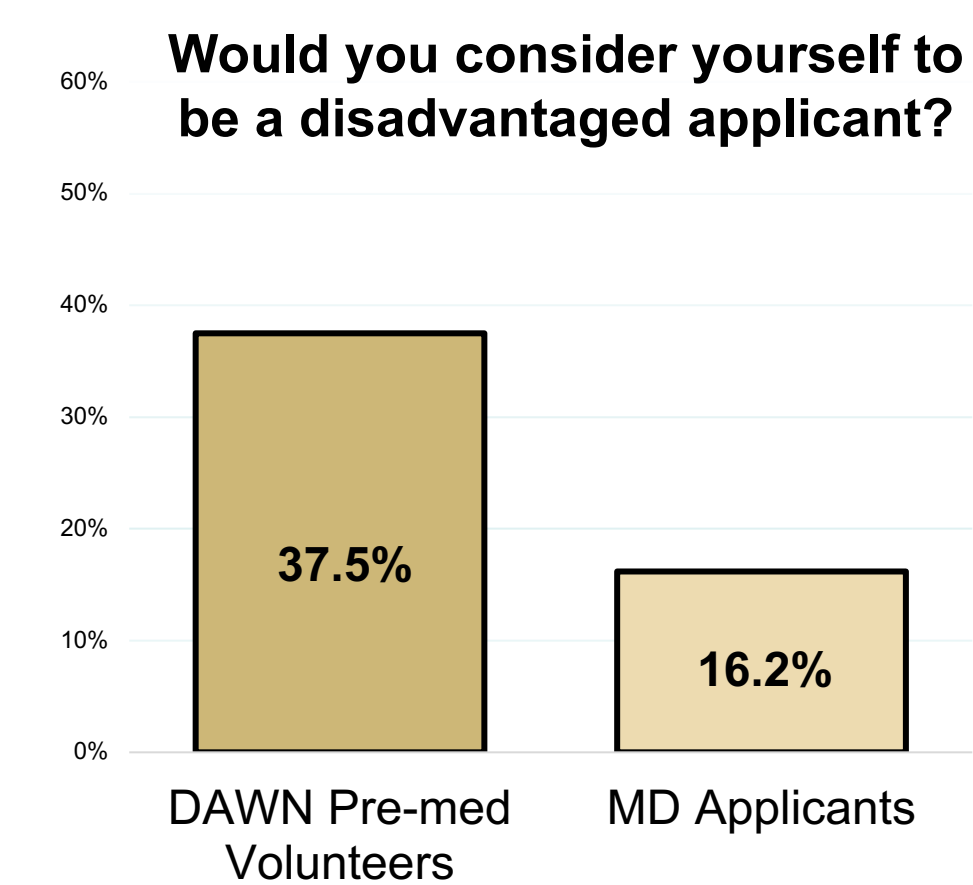
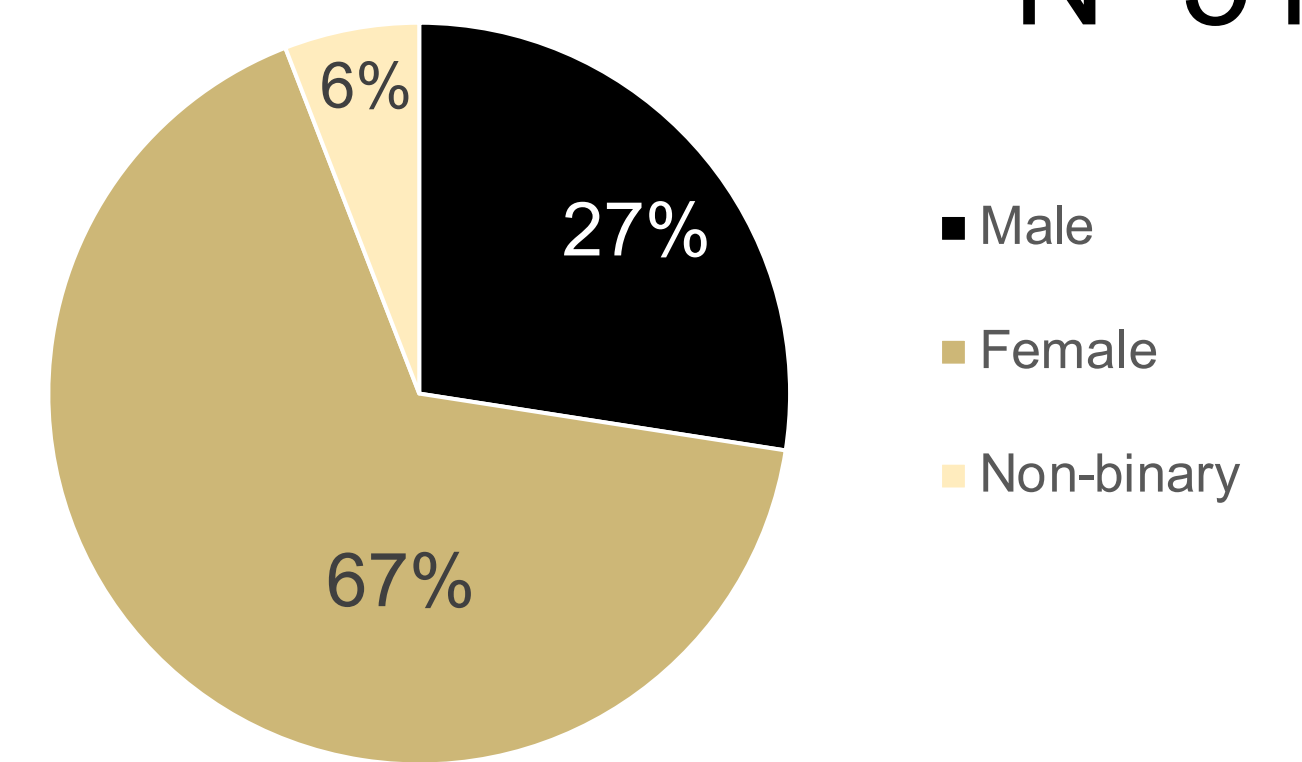
Compare DAWN pre-health volunteers to national applicant pools

Methods

- 40 question voluntary survey distributed through Qualtrics to all DAWN work groups with known pre-health volunteers.
- Collection period: 3 months (10/21/2020-1/11/2021).
- Incomplete responses were not included in the study.
- Qualitative data was analyzed using an immersion crystallization approach, conducted by four DAWN staff, to identify emergent themes.

Needs Assessment Data

Demographics



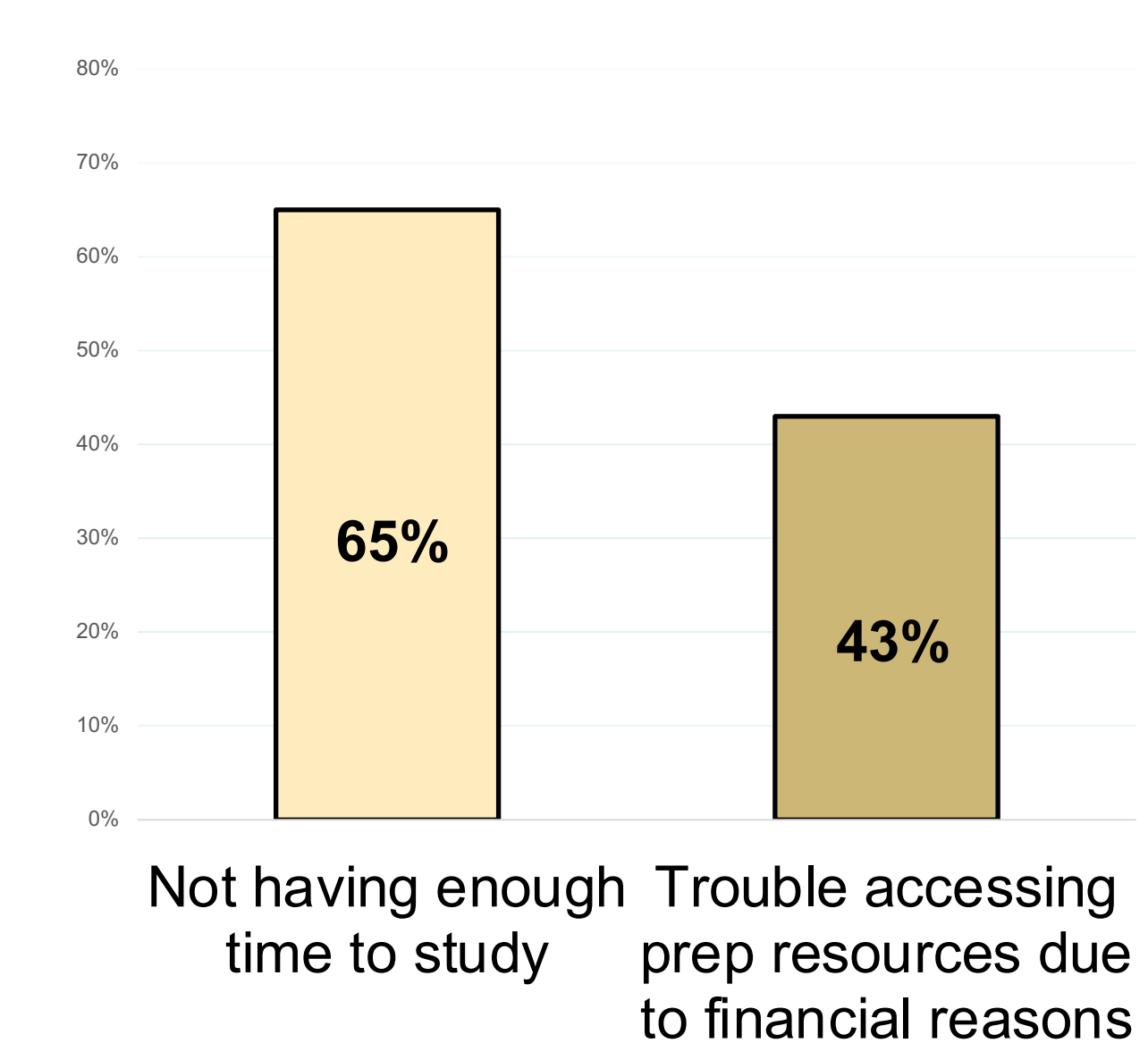
	All DAWN premed students % of total (N)	MD Applicants % of total (N) ¹	DO Applicants % of total (N)	MD Matriculants % of total (N)	DO Matriculants % of total (N)
American Indian or Alaskan Indian	0 (0)	1.1 (561)	0.2 (43)	1.1 (248)	0.1 (7)
Asian	7.5 (3)	24.5 (13018)	23.1 (4998)	24.9 (5543)	24.0 (1859)
Black	5.0 (2)	9.8 (5197)	7.1 (1543)	9.5 (2117)	3.2 (244)
Hispanic/Latino	32.5 (13)	11.0 (5820)	9.6 (2088)	12.0 (2678)	7.6 (587)
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0 (0)	0.5 (214)	0.1 (26)	0.4 (80)	0.1 (5)
White	55.0 (22)	51.3 (27235)	51.4 (11134)	53.4 (11874)	57.4 (4446)
Other	7.5 (3)	4.4 (2311)		3.8 (850)	

Themes

Lack of access to shadowing experiences is a significant barrier.	"Other challenges include being unable to get significant shadowing experience without getting paid for it. As a result I have to take the extra step like becoming a CNA instead of just becoming a scribe in order to make enough money while also getting shadowing experience in a hospital."
Lack of knowledgeable, personalized advising and mentoring with a desire for more effective mentoring	"I would also love more mentoring and shadowing opportunities because I struggle most in feeling that I am adequate enough to be a physician, especially with a lack of diversity in the health care field" "I think it's also been hard knowing how this process is and how much Medical school is going to cost and if there are scholarships available as I am a first-generation student."
Lack of access to financial resources is a barrier	"My main constraint has been that I'm financially independent. This has imposed a large time and financial constraint on how I've had to move through the pre-med process. My application timeline largely revolves around when I anticipate having the money to study for the MCAT, and to apply to medical school." "Going to college means that my family lacks the financial support that I could provide if I worked full time."

Time & Financial Barriers in Preparing for Entrance Exam

Challenges In Preparing For Entrance Exam



Time constraints that have contributed to your ability to study/utilize prep resources.	DAWN volunteers % of total (N)
Working to Support Self	53 (27)
Working to Support family/loved ones	18 (9)
Supporting siblings and loved ones requiring a significant amount of time	16 (8)
Volunteering	49 (25)
Extracurricular activities to supplement application	49 (25)
Other	6 (3)

Discussion

- DAWN demonstrates high prevalence of URM and disadvantaged students compared to applicants nationally. Allocating resources to SRFCs may broadly improve representation in health care.
- Desire for personalized advising likely related to underlying first-generation status and lack of accessible mentors with similar backgrounds.
- Financial barriers are often intersectional including access to exam prep resources, allocation of time to for building a competitive application, and ability to apply. Clear opportunity for an actionable intervention that would likely have significant impact.

Next Steps

- Utilize identified barriers and themes to design and implement initiatives geared towards supporting pre-health volunteers at DAWN including shadowing opportunities, personalized mentoring, and scholarship funding.
- Data collected from this study can be used as a guide for other SRFC's with similar volunteer cohorts.

References

¹Tables A-1 through A-19 accessed through AAMC 2020 FACTS: Applicants and Matriculant Data: <https://www.aamc.org/data-reports/students-residents/interactive-data/2020-facts-applicants-and-matriculants-data>