

Demographic Characteristics of Paramedic Students in the United States



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Introduction

African Americans, Hispanics, and American Indians are underrepresented in medicine, nursing, and dentistry (IOM, 2004). While African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Native Americans represent more than 29% of the U.S. population, less than 5% of paramedics, 12% of nurses, 14% of physicians, and 7% of dentists are from these populations (Sullivan, 2001). Little data exist that demonstrates the ethnic diversity of paramedic students in the United States.

Hypothesis

Ethnic diversity of paramedic student graduates is not representative of national levels of diversity.

Methodology

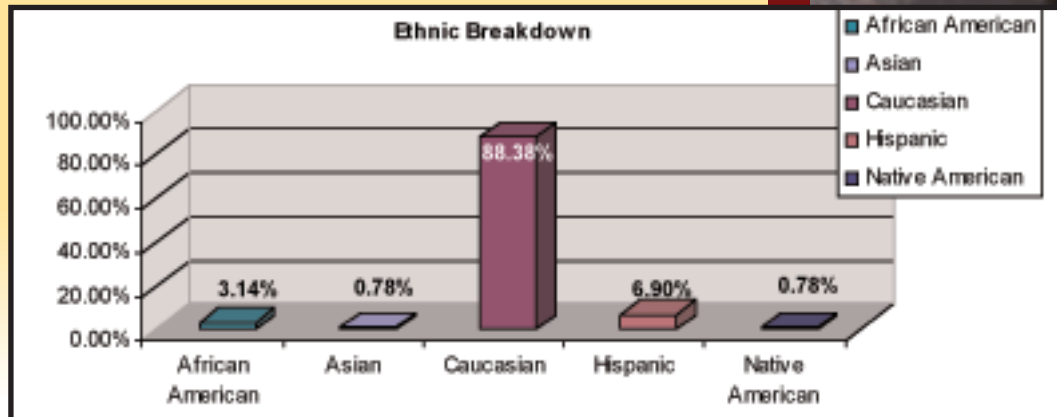
Between January 2001 and December 2003, paramedic students participating in FISDAP, an internet based tracking system, prospectively reported clinical experiences. During account set-up, students voluntarily reported demographic data, including gender and ethnicity. Inclusion criteria consisted of student consent, successful graduation and instructor verification of student records

Results

1319 student records from 65 geographically distinct institutions met the inclusion criteria for this study. 637, 48% reported gender and ethnicity data. Of these, 455 were male and 182 female. Student responses for ethnicity were: African American 3% (n 20); Hispanic, 7% (n 44); Native American, 1% (n 5); Asian, 1% (n 5); Caucasian; 88% (n 563).

Conclusion

The hypothesis is proven. While 12% of paramedic student graduates are African American, Asian American, Hispanic American, and Native American, these numbers do not reflect the national diversity rate of 29% for these populations.



Ethnicity	Percent
African American	3.14%
Asian	0.78%
Caucasian	88.38%
Hispanic	6.90%
Native American	0.78%



[blend]