

Title

Diversity Trends in Interventional Pulmonology Fellowship over the Past Decade

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Background

Diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) in the United States (US) healthcare system remains a significant concern, despite evidence suggesting that diverse healthcare teams lead to improved patient outcomes. Over the past decade, the field of Interventional Pulmonology (IP) has seen growth in both fellowship positions and applicant numbers. It has become one of the most competitive fellowships. However, despite the expansion in positions and ACGME accreditation, DEI remains insufficiently addressed in IP fellowships.

Understanding whether ongoing efforts exist to diversify the IP fellowship is essential. Gaining insight into the perspectives of current and past IP fellows on DEI initiatives within their programs enables a meaningful assessment of these efforts and helps identify areas for improvement. While research specifically focused on IP fellows remains limited, studies from other medical specialties provide valuable perspectives and highlight broader trends in DEI implementation.

A nationwide survey of cardiovascular fellows-in-training revealed that while 67% believed diversity and equity was valued by their programs, nearly 30% did not feel supported by their institution's culture. Additionally, less than half reported that social determinants of health and health disparities were routinely addressed in their curriculum. These findings suggest that, despite recognizing the importance of DEI, significant gaps remain in implementation and support.

To gain a comprehensive understanding of how current and past IP fellows perceive DEI efforts within their programs, we believe conducting a survey would be beneficial. This would provide direct insights into the effectiveness of existing initiatives and highlight areas needing attention.

Objectives/goals

This study aims to:

1. Evaluate the representation of women, URM, and medical school backgrounds in IP fellowship over the past 12 years to better understand disparities and identify significant trends.
2. Assess the perceptions of past and current IP fellows regarding the presence and effectiveness of DEI efforts in their fellowship programs over the years.

Study design

We used publicly available de-identified data from NRMP and ACGME.

NRMP has data available from 2012 to 2024 for Interventional Pulmonology fellowship for the following:

1. Total number of positions
2. Total number of applicants that applied to IP fellowship
3. Total number that matched
4. Applicant medical school type (US allopathic program, US osteopathic program, US- international medical graduate, non-US international medical graduate).

The ACGME Resource Book has data available for the 2023-2024 cycle. Information on gender and ethnicity was only available for 17 ACGME-accredited programs. Data from non-ACGME accredited programs was not available. The results showed that the 17 ACGME accredited programs had 15 fellows. From these there were 3 females (20%) and 12 males (80%). There were 6 Whites, 7 Asians, 1 black and 1 other. From the 3 females 1 was White and 2 were Asian and from the males 5 were White, 5 Asian, 1 Black and 1 Other.

Our goal is to obtain the data for gender, ethnicity and medical school type of all applicants from the year 2012 to 2024. To gather comprehensive data on gender, ethnicity, and medical school background for all applicants from 2012 to 2024, we plan to contact program directors and coordinators to obtain the email addresses of previous graduates. We will then send a brief survey with the following questions:

1. Year of graduation
2. Gender (Male, Female, Other)
3. Ethnicity (White, Black, Asian, Other)
4. Medical school training (US allopathic, US osteopathic, US-IMG, non-US IMG)
5. Region of your IP fellowship training (Northeast, Southeast, Southwest, Midwest, West/Pacific Northwest, Mid-Atlantic)

To assess the perception of DEI efforts in IP programs, we will add additional questions in the survey:

1. Do you believe DEI is given priority in your program? (Yes/No)
2. Is there diversity in faculty members? (Yes/No)
3. Is there diversity among physicians in leadership positions? (Yes/No)
4. Strengths of your training program in regards to DEI? (free text answer)
5. Weaknesses of your training program in regards to DEI? (free text answer)

Statistics

We will present the data as a percentage. We will analyze the trends over the years of females, non-caucasians and international medical graduates in IP fellowship since 2012. Chi square analysis will be used to compare the percentages between the groups. The responses from the survey will also be presented in percentage.

Primary outcome

1. To assess the percentage of female and URM IP fellows each year and the trend over the last 12 years
2. To assess the medical school type of the matched IP fellows and the trend over the last 12 years.
3. To assess the region of the fellowship and compare trends according to region.

Secondary outcome

1. Perception of the fellows about their training program in regards to DEI

Future applications

Our study will provide valuable insights into diversity trends in IP fellowship over the past 12 years, highlighting persistent disparities in representation. Despite the growing presence of women in medicine, their participation in IP remains disproportionately low, along with the underrepresentation of URMs. By bringing these disparities to light, our research emphasizes the need for targeted initiatives to foster a more inclusive and supportive pathway for these groups in IP. Furthermore, our survey on fellows' perceptions of DEI efforts will offer valuable insights into the effectiveness of existing initiatives and pointing out the areas for improvement.