National Evaluation of Racial and Ethnic Discrimination in U.S. Surgical Residency Programs

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Background

- Workplace discrimination is linked to decreased morale, work effort, and career satisfaction
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- Limited evidence exists regarding the prevalence, sources, and predictors of racial/ethnic discrimination in general surgery residency

Objectives

1. Evaluate the prevalence and sources of discrimination based on race/ethnicity
2. Identify factors associated with this discrimination
3. Assess the impact of this discrimination on resident wellness

Methods

- A national survey was administered immediately following the 2019 ABSITE
- Residents were asked if they experienced discriminatory behaviors based on race/ethnicity in the past 6 months and to identify sources
- Burnout was measured using the abbreviated Maslach Burnout inventory
- Attrition was defined as thoughts of leaving the program within the academic year
- Suicidality was defined as suicidal thoughts within the past year
- Multivariable logistic regression model was estimated to evaluate resident/program characteristics associated with discrimination

Results

- Of 5,679 respondents at 301 program (85.6% response rate), 1,346 (23.7%) reported experiencing discrimination based on race/ethnicity
- Discrimination rates were highest in Black (70.7%), Asian (45.9%), and Hispanic (25.3%) residents
- Sources of discrimination varied based on specific discriminatory behavior
- On multivariable modeling, residents were more likely to report discrimination if female (OR 1.58, 95% CI 1.36-1.84, p<0.001) or non-white (Black OR 20.29, 95% CI 14.14-29.11, p<0.001; Hispanic OR 2.61, 95% CI 1.96-3.47, p<0.001; Asian OR 6.06, 95% CI 5.01-7.33, p<0.001)
- Residents who reported experiencing discrimination based on race/ethnicity reported significantly higher rates of burnout (52% vs 40%), thoughts of attrition (16.2% vs 10.1%), and suicidality (6.5% vs 3.8%)

Conclusions

- Discrimination based on race/ethnicity is experienced by a large portion of non-white resident in general surgery training
- Discriminatory behaviors originate from multiple sources depending on the specific type of discrimination
- Strategies aimed at mitigating discrimination must be multifaceted to target the specific behavior and source