

Diversity Amongst Current Hand Fellowship Directors

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INTRODUCTION:

Diversity, equity, and inclusion amongst faculty members within a healthcare system is known to be an important aspect of providing quality and competent care. Previous studies have shown that orthopaedic surgery remains the least diverse specialty in medicine and continues to lag compared to other medical specialties, even as efforts to diversify the orthopaedic workforce continue. While it is important to examine diversity within the orthopaedic surgery workforce, it is prudent to note diversity in leadership as one of the many avenues that can encourage diversity amongst trainees, and subsequently, amongst the orthopaedic surgeon workforce. This study aims to examine the racial/ethnic and gender diversity amongst hand surgery fellowship directors.

METHODS: All hand surgery fellowships in the United States of America (USA) were reviewed via the American Society for Surgery of the Hand Fellowship Directory. Each fellowship website was examined to collect demographic information regarding the fellowship director in the following areas: race/ethnicity, sex, fellowship training background (orthopaedic vs general surgery/plastic surgery), and fellowship location. The categories for race/ethnicity include Black/African American, Native American, White/Caucasian, East Asian, Middle Eastern/South Asian, and Hispanic/Latin/South American. For this study, racial/ethnic groups underrepresented in medicine (URM) were defined as Black/African American, Hispanic/Latin/South American, and Native American while non-URM was defined as White and Asian. Simple statistics were performed.

RESULTS: Of the 94 distinct hand fellowship directors in the USA, 71% of current fellowship directors completed orthopaedic surgery training, compared to 29% with training in plastic surgery. With regards to sex, 87% (n=82) of current fellowship directors are men and 13% (n=12) are women. Nine of the 12 (75%) female fellowship directors were trained in orthopaedic surgery. Regarding race/ethnicity, 77% (n=72) of fellowship directors are White/Caucasian, 21% (n=20) of fellowship directors are Asian, 1% (n=1) of fellowship directors are Black/African American, and 1% (n=1) of fellowship directors are Hispanic/Latin/South American. URM fellowship directors make up 2% of hand fellowship directors and non-URM fellowship directors make up 98% of hand fellowship directors.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION:

This study examines the diversity amongst current hand fellowship directors across the USA and found that hand fellowship directors who are considered URM make up only 2% of hand fellowship directors while women make up only 13% of the current hand fellowship directors. The data provided in this study can help direct efforts to increase diversity amongst hand fellowship directors, and as leaders in the field, subsequently amongst the hand surgeon workforce.