

SCIENCE

Barriers to Recruitment of Racial Minorities into STEM

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Diverse populations are underserved by health care and underrepresented in STEM professions overall, specifically in communication sciences and disorders (CSD). Minorities who are members and affiliates of the American Speech-Language Hearing Association (ASHA) only represent 8.3% of the over 200,000 members (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, "Profile of ASHA members and affiliates, year-end 2019," 2020, www.asha.org). N. Dadzie and N. Gurevich, (2019) "Barriers to recruitment of racial minorities into communication disorders," 2019, surveyed undergraduate students across several Indiana campuses and found that minority students are more likely than white students to prefer having their race/ethnicity represented in their chosen jobs. Dadzie and Gurevich found that the lack of diversity in the field perpetuates itself. Minority students who are underrepresented in a field are therefore less likely to select that field.

But what about minority students who have selected a field in which they are underrepresented? In order to compare responses between the general student population (Dadzie and Gurevich's results) and the population of students who selected CSD as their field of study, CSD majors in Purdue Fort Wayne and neighboring schools will be surveyed using the same questionnaire. Given the underrepresentation of minority students in CSD, their view of needing to be represented in their chosen professions may differ from the non-CSD underrepresented minority (URM) students' views. As such, the results are predicted to be one of two options. Either the

URM students who chose to major in CSD do not find underrepresentation in their chosen jobs problematic and as such are different from the overall group of URM students, or the URM students in CSD feel the same as the overall URM group but chose the field anyway. Personal interviews are a potential third step to follow up on either finding. Results will help determine how much of a barrier their current underrepresentation in STEM fields is to recruiting URM students into STEM. This research will inform future practices in promoting STEM and health care professions to diverse populations in the United States.

Research advisor Naomi Gurevich writes: "Lack of diversity in health care fields perpetuates itself as underrepresented minority students tend to self-select careers in which they are represented. Nana Dadzie and Kayla Reidenbach explore undergraduate students' views related to selecting their majors, with particular attention to health care fields in which underrepresentation of a population also leads to its underserving."



Nana Dadzie presenting a poster at the Illinois Speech-Language-Hearing Association convention in February 2020 in Rockford, Illinois). Courtesy of the Illinois Speech-Language-Hearing Association; photo by Josh Dobbs, Bostrom Corporation.