

Recruitment, Retention, and Training of African American and Latino Standardized Patients: A Collaborative Study

Mauritha R. Everett, M.S. Ed. R.N.,² Win May, M.D. Ph.D.,¹ Carolyn Tressler Nowels, M.S.P.H.² and Deborah S. Main, Ph.D.²

¹Division of Medical Education and Department of Pediatrics
Keck School of Medicine of the University of Southern California
Los Angeles, CA 90033 U.S.A.

²Department of Family Medicine
University of Colorado at Denver and Health Sciences Center
P.O. Box 460004
Aurora, CO 80046-0004 U.S.A.

Phone: (+) 1-303-617-8194

Fax: (+) 1-303-617-8194

Email: mrevert@msn.com

ABSTRACT

Latino and African American standardized patients bring diversity and authenticity to the instructional and assessment mission of standardized patient programs. However, minority standardized patients are often difficult to recruit and retain and may require different training strategies to maximize their performance and recall potential. The purpose of this study is to identify important factors that affect the recruitment, retention, and training of African American, and Latino Standardized Patients (SPs) in two medical schools.

Latino and African American standardized patients from the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center and University of Southern California Keck School of Medicine SP Programs participated in a telephone interview. Trained African American interviewers interviewed the African American SPs and trained Latina interviewers conducted the Latino/a interviews. They asked structured questions, using open-ended and probing techniques to elicit information from the participants. The phone calls were audio taped, transcribed and later analyzed using qualitative methods by the team. Sixty-eight potential participants were sent a letter inviting them to participate. Forty-six standardized patients responded and participated in the telephone interviews (27 African American, 19 Latino; 32 female and 14 male). The interview transcripts were analyzed using an "editing" approach, a technique derived from grounded theory which encourages interpretation of the data using a team approach. Transcripts were compared across team members to identify common elements or themes. Common themes, patterns, and representative quotations were analyzed and confirmed.

Common themes identified included reasons participants became SPs, motivation for continued involvement as SPs, preferred training methods and preferred recruitment, retention, and training strategies. This study revealed potential barriers and suggested strategies that could improve recruitment, training, and retention of minority-standardized patients in medical education.
