Development and Evaluation of a Novel, Peer-Led Advocacy and Activism Curriculum for Asian Health Professional Students

Ruchita S. Pendse, Davis Chhoa, Vivian Lou, Richard Liang, Bright Zhou
Stanford University School of Medicine

Background
The year 2020 brought a national reckoning with systemic racism and police brutality, and particularly raised the question of non-Black POC allyship within the Asian health professional student community.

“Activated” Asian health professional students, or students who are in the process of developing a political consciousness, noted a lack of curricular space within traditional medical school curricula to mutually expand their identities and skills as allies, advocates, and activists.

Approach: Based on Kern’s six-step approach to curriculum design

- No existing curriculum for Asian health professional students to learn advocacy and activism
- Through peer and group discussions, Stanford APAMSA leaders defined “Empowering Activists and Advocates” module
- Target learners: “activated” students who are in process of developing a political consciousness
- Balance between student’s online learning literacy during pandemic and online fatigue
- Start with 1 hour session to respect students’ availability
- Goal: Develop peer-led curriculum for “activated” Asian health professional students to empower activists and advocates
- Learning Objectives
  1. To facilitate a brave space for group healing and community building
  2. To discuss emotional stressors and sources of strength prevalent in the API community
  3. To equip students with tools (e.g., frameworks, vocabulary) to be an activist and advocate in their respective communities and future practice as healthcare providers

Objectives/Aims
Student leaders at Stanford University School of Medicine Asian Pacific American Medical Student Association (APAMSA) addressed this curricular gap by developing a peer-led curriculum specifically for “activated” Asian health professional students.

Results
Of the 19 participants in the pilot session, 15 (79%) responded to our survey (Figure 1).

A significant majority of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed to feeling ready to apply tools from the session to support themselves (Figure 2).

Among the respondents, 12 (80%) felt more connected with other members of the Stanford APAMSA community. 14 (93%) of respondents were satisfied with the content and the event overall.

Thematic analysis of how respondents expected to apply insights from the session identified that participants were more interested in exploring activism and advocacy in the future and intended to be more deliberate about the spaces in which they will engage in advocacy versus activism.

Selected Quotations
“This session made me reflect on how sometimes we need to work within the system to abolish the system, and how activism/advocacy should co-exist. I’m thinking about how there are some systems that I believe need to be abolished (prisons + police) and some systems that need radical transformation (i.e., the medical system). And to work towards this radical transformation we need to simultaneously work within the system to build power and also work outside the confines of the system to imagine/create.”

– Pre-Clerkship Medical Student

“As I pursue my interests in improving health equity and access to care, I can now better recognize support networks and have more confidence in my role as an activist from the insights shared in the session.”

– Pre-Medical Undergraduate Student

Next Steps
We present a successful initial module for Asian health professional advocacy and activism with high rates of satisfaction and self-reported actionable learning.

Based on participant feedback, future modules are planned around pan-Asian identity and history, intergenerational communication, and intersectionality, and will continue to be developed and evaluated using the six-step process.

Lastly, this peer-led curricular development process can be replicated by other APAMSA chapters to curricularly support “activated” Asian health professional students across the country.

References
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Contact: Ruchita Pendse, MS4, rpendse@stanford.edu and Davis Chhoa, MS1, dchhoa@stanford.edu