

Introduction

Starting in the 1970's, and based on the momentum of the Civil Rights Movement in the preceding decades, many predominantly white medical schools began to open their doors and enroll black students. In fact, the first black medical student was admitted to Duke University in 1963 (around the same time as UCLA) highlighting the tepid pace of progress of racial integration in medical education. Additionally, medical students sometimes describe medical school as dehumanizing, and a hostile environment due to the large amounts of information to learn, the competition among other medical students, and a perceived lack of support.

Racial inequalities present in medical education in a multitude of ways, including basing disease prevalences on majority populations and using images that disproportionately represent white patients.

George Floyd's death was not only a sentinel event in terms of police violence, but underscored the way in which medicine can be complicit in perpetuating racism. Floyd was killed by the police while being arrested and his death was due in part to delayed medical care. During his initial autopsy, it was stated that his death was attributed to being "high on fentanyl and recently using methamphetamine at the time of his death." The initial report claimed that there were no physical findings that could be connected to his death.

Institutional discrimination is described as "discrimination that's encoded into the operating procedures, policies, laws, and/or objectives of society and its institutions as a whole. There is a significant lack of trust between African Americans and intuitions, police officers, and health care. The hopes of this study are to bring light to the experiences that African American Students' have had through the pandemic dealing with the death of George Floyd, Black Lives Matter, and Institutional Racism and further the discussion in order to provide better support to Students and staff of color in the medical field, so as then to further support those in the community in the future.

Aims and Objectives

Aim I: Identify key themes related to the effect that George Floyd's death had on medical and premedical students using public search engines such as Reddit.

Aim II: Identify key themes related to medical and premedical students on their views of institutional racism.

Aim III: Articulate recommendations for building trust with these students, and how best to provide support.

Methods

- The methodology of this project involves key word searches with the desired populations (self-identified prospective medical school applicants and medical students) on Reddit
- Due to the information coming from public online forums, consent is not needed and no IRB was required within this project.
- Data was collected from public forums using key word searches to identify topics that discuss events such as the murder of George Floyd and movements such as Black Lives Matter. Both initial posts and subsequent discourse (e.g. replies and subthreads) were collected and analyzed.
- The number of participants (posts) being sought was around 50 medical and premedical students on Reddit.

Key words used in search:

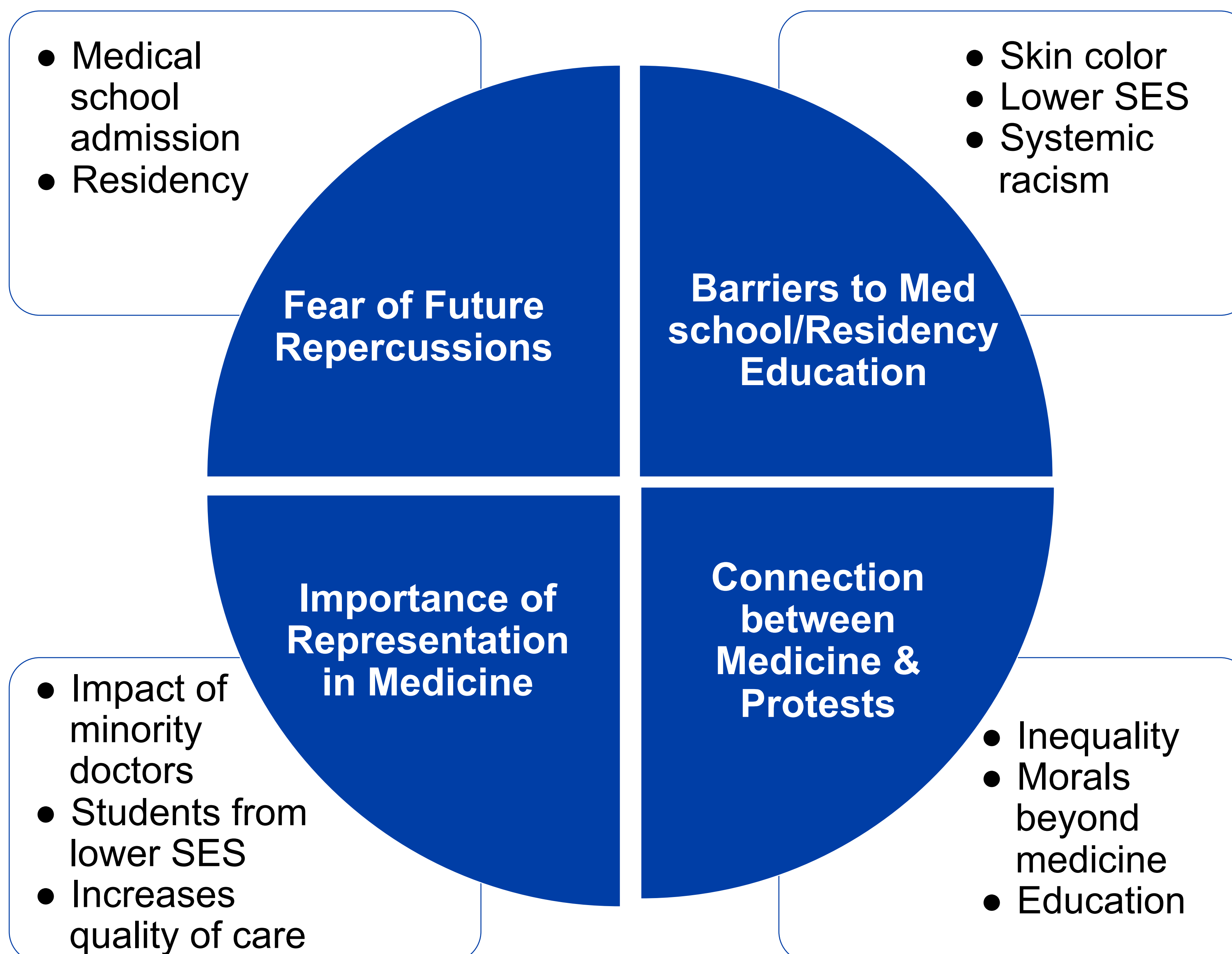
BLM AND Medical students

BLM AND Pre-medical students

George Floyd AND Medical Students

George Floyd AND pre-medical students

Results



Conclusions

- The 4 largest themes found consistently throughout each post were that of fear of future repercussions, barriers to medical school and residency admission, importance of representation in medicine, and connection between medicine and protests.
- Many students mentioned wanting to participate in the protests, but were afraid to do so, due to the fear of how it may negatively impact their future careers. Many voiced that it may not be seen as favorable to administration in medical school as well as residency programs.
- Racial and socioeconomic barriers for premedical and medical students also seemed to be at the forefront of the conversation. Discussion of events surrounding George Floyd and BLM lead into a conversation about systemic racism and how skin color and socioeconomic status played a role in URM and those from lower SES being admitted into medical school or residencies .
- Conversations also included the importance of having representation in medicine and the positive influences it can have on other medical students and especially patients.
- Connections between the protests and medicine were often brought up. For many, their motivation for becoming a physician was not altogether different from their perspective on the injustices surrounding the murder of George Floyd or the goals of the BLM movement. A lot of the discussion talked about the "morals beyond medicine." Becoming a physician is more than just writing prescriptions and diagnosing. Many also drew a connection between the professional responsibilities of physicians as community leaders and addressing biases and inequalities within medicine.

References

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