THE IMPACT OF INDUSTRY-BASED TRAINING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF PHARM.D GRADUATES ON OBTAINING A POSITION WITH THE RUTGERS PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY FELLOWSHIP (RPIF) PROGRAM

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BACKGROUND

Many PharmD students who seek a career in the pharmaceutical industry apply for industry-focused postgraduate training programs. The Rutgers Pharmaceutical Industry Fellowship (RPIF) Program is the largest postgraduate training program designed to prepare PharmDs for a career in the pharmaceutical industry. Applicant experiences as predictors of successfully obtaining a position in the RPIF Program have not been studied. Recently an evaluation of RPIF Program applicants was conducted to identify the impact of undergraduate industry-based educational and training experiences and leadership roles of PharmD graduates on the likelihood of successfully obtaining a position in the RPIF Program.

OBJECTIVES

Primary objective: To analyze data from applicants who completed industry-based rotations and/or internships to determine how these experiences relate to successfully obtaining a fellowship position.

Secondary objective: To analyze the impact of other experiences such as leadership, research, and organizational involvement on successfully obtaining a fellowship position.

METHODS

A randomized blinded analysis of the curricular view of July 2008 and July 2009 RPIF Program applicants (n=330) was accomplished to evaluate:

i. industry-based rotations and/or internship experiences
ii. other specialty experiences
iii. pharmacy organization memberships
iv. leadership experiences
v. poster presentations and publications
vi. additional degrees as well as other experiences and accomplishments

Data was collected and entered into Zoomerang for analysis.

Primary analyses were to determine the likelihood of successfully obtaining a fellowship position and to determine the relative likelihood of successfully obtaining a fellowship position for different criteria.

RESULTS

Many PharmD students who seek a career in the pharmaceutical industry applied for industry-focused postgraduate training programs. In 2008 and 2009, respectively, 71% and 81% of accepted applicants had an industry rotation compared with 58% and 65% of non-accepted applicants.

To analyze the impact of other experiences such as leadership, research, and organizational involvement on successfully obtaining a fellowship position.

Primary analyses were to determine the likelihood of successfully obtaining a fellowship position and to determine the relative likelihood of successfully obtaining a fellowship position for different criteria.

Inclusion Criteria:

• Fellowship Applicants starting July 2008 and July 2009 that were on the RPIF Program website portal

Exclusion Criteria:

• Applicants who did not apply

The relative likelihood of successfully obtaining a fellowship was determined for each factor evaluated:

i. industry-based rotations and/or internship experiences
ii. other specialty experiences
iii. pharmacy organization memberships
iv. leadership experiences
v. poster presentations and publications
vi. additional degrees as well as other experiences and accomplishments

Data was collected and entered into Zoomerang for analysis.

• A retrospective study design is not interventional therefore cause and effect cannot be determined.
• This analysis examined experiences and achievements of applicants regardless of discipline. Specific experiences and achievements may have varying degrees of importance as it relates to specific disciplines in the fellowship.

Overall, accepted RPIF Program applicants had more industry-based experiences and accomplishments compared to 58% and 65% of non-accepted applicants. In 2008 and 2009, respectively, 71% and 81% of accepted applicants had an industry rotation compared with 58% and 65% of non-accepted applicants.

In 2008, 34% of accepted applicants had other industry experience in addition to their experiential rotations compared to 16% of non-accepted applicants (OR 2.7). In 2009, the results were similar among both groups, 27% of accepted applicants vs. 25% non-accepted applicants.

Pharmacy-related (and other) student organizational involvement was higher among accepted applicants, most commonly with APhA and ASHP.

On average in 2008 and 2009, 68% of accepted applicants had held leadership positions compared to 45% of non-accepted applicants. Accepted applicants also held more officer positions in student organizations, when compared with non-accepted applicants (Figure 7).

Overall, there was little difference in the accepted (36%) and non-accepted (35%) group applicants with respect to whether they had a degree in addition to their PharmD (Table 3).

LIMITATIONS

This study has several limitations:

• Blinding during data collection was incomplete in some cases since some elements included in a CV can identify the applicant's name, e.g., authorship of manuscripts and posters.
• Other factors that influenced successful candidacy for the RPIF Program were not evaluated. These factors include but are not limited to level of performance in the interviewing process and the strength of letters of recommendation.
• A retrospective study design is not interventional therefore cause and effect cannot be determined.
• Applicants who declined offers were not included in the analysis.
• This analysis examined experiences and achievements of applicants regardless of discipline. Specific experiences and achievements may have varying degrees of importance as it relates to specific disciplines in the fellowship.

CONCLUSIONS

Overall, accepted RPIF Program applicants had more industry-based experiences and leadership experience than non-accepted applicants.

DISCLOSURE

All authors of this study are paid employees of Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey.