The Impact of Industry-Based Experience and Professional Involvement on Obtaining a Fellowship with the Rutgers Pharmaceutical Industry Fellowship Program
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BACKGROUND

With career options for pharmacists expanding, the number of pharmacists seeking careers in the pharmaceutical industry has steadily grown over the past few decades. For most pharmacists and student pharmacists, the first step to a career in the pharmaceutical industry begins with successfully obtaining a pharmaceutical industry fellowship. Pharmaceutical Industry Fellowship programs are designed to bridge the experience gap between recent PharmD graduates and the entry-level job requirements of the pharmaceutical industry. These programs have multiplied and expanded as interest in the pharmaceutical industry has grown.

The Rutgers Pharmaceutical Industry Fellowship program is the oldest and largest industry fellowship program with a rich history of over 650 alumni and 25 years of experience. An interest has risen, competition for this prestigious program has also grown. From 2008 to 2012, the number of applications to the program has doubled while the number of positions has remained static. This analysis seeks to determine the traits and experiences common to successful applicants against those not admitted, and to compare trends over the past five years.

OBJECTIVES

Primary objectives:
• To analyze curriculum vitae (CV) metrics from the most recent applicants to the Rutgers Pharmaceutical Industry Fellowship program to determine how industry or specialty-based experiences correlate to success in obtaining an industry fellowship position.
• To compare current acceptance rates to acceptance rates over the past 5 years of the program.

Secondary objectives:
• To analyze the effect of extracurricular leadership, scholarly activity, and organizational involvement on success in obtaining an industry fellowship position.
• To compare current acceptance rates to acceptance rates over the past 5 years of the program.

METHODS

An analysis was completed on all CVs (n=502) submitted to the online fellowship application database for 2012 admission to the program to evaluate:

- Pharmaceutical industry internships and rotations
- Specialty experiences (managed care, association management, etc.)
- Pharmacy organization membership and leadership
- Demonstrations and publications
- Leadership activities
- Additional degrees and educational background

Selection criteria: Fellowship applicants starting July 2012 that were submitted to the online fellowship application database.

Next criterion: Applicants with incomplete applications or who declined RPIF Program offers.

Each CV was screened utilizing a standard survey and entered into a central database. Odds ratios (OR) compared evaluated criteria in the accepted applicant group versus the non-accepted applicant group for experience and scholarly activity (an odds ratio greater than 1 favors the experience in the accepted applicants). Graphical representation of data was used for other measures deemed to have an impact on applicant success.

DISCUSSION

Over the past five years, acceptance rates for the program has greatly decreased from 37% in 2008 to 22% in 2012 (TABLE 1). During this time, the number of positions has remained fairly constant while the number of applications continues to increase. Prior experience with the pharmaceutical industry or a similar environment government agency contact research organization, etc. was more common in accepted applicants than non-accepted applicants (FIGURE 2). When correlating internship experience and rotation experience, 54 candidates (of 56 accepted applicants) had either an internship or rotation in either a corporate or similar setting that gave valuable industry experience. Only 24% of accepted applicants were involved in a publication versus 23% of non-accepted applicants (odds ratio=1.6).

CONCLUSIONS

Disclosures
All authors are affiliated with the Rutgers Institute for Pharmaceutical Industry Fellowship Program and are paid employees of Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey.

REFERENCES

DISCUSSION (CONTINUED)

When correlating internship experience and rotation experience, 54 candidates (of 56 accepted applicants) had either an internship or rotation in either a corporate or similar setting that gave valuable industry experience. Only 24% of accepted applicants were involved in a publication versus 23% of non-accepted applicants (odds ratio=1.6).

Other factors that may contribute to successful candidates receiving an offer include:
- 36% of accepted applicants had a previous presentation versus 24% of non-accepted (odds ratio=1, FIGURE 4)
- 30% of accepted applicants were involved in a publication versus 23% of non-accepted applicants (odds ratio=01.3, FIGURE 4)
- 95% of accepted applicants were involved in at least one professional organization versus 81% of non-accepted applicants. Involvement rates were higher in accepted applicants in the Rho Chi Honor Society, Pi Lambda Sigma Leadership Society, pharmacy fraternity involvement, and social fraternity involvement (FIGURE 5)

There was little difference between whether accepted applicants were involved in leadership positions than non-accepted applicants (73% versus 67%). However, the quality of the leadership experience were not assessed overall because for a breakdown of positions (FIGURE 6). Of accepted applicants, 40 of the 56 (71%) attended the Fellowship Information and Networking Day at the Rutgers Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy prior to interviewing at the ADHP Midyear Clinical Meeting.