

Impact of Integrating Undergraduate Research Experiences into Public Health Curricula

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Abstract:

Undergraduate research involves a collaboration between students and faculty in the discovery of new information, and the value of integrating this type of research into curricula is evident and growing. In this study, we assessed the impact of integrating undergraduate research experiences into public health curricula on students' overall educational experience. A non-equivalent comparison group design was utilized. The intervention group participated in research experiences involving the use of a structured social observation tool in a 1.5 to 2 mile walking route within selected zip codes. Self-reported surveys assessing the key study variables were administered at baseline and at post-intervention. There were no statistically significant differences in knowledge found between intervention (n = 42) and control groups (n = 36); however, statistically significant differences were found from pre-test to post-test for both groups. Among those in the intervention group, perception of confidence in conducting research increased, and this increase occurred at a much higher rate compared to those in the control group. This effect was also dependent on time. The evaluation of this research experience demonstrates the positive impact integrating undergraduate research experiences can have on students' overall educational experience.

Description:

Goal:

To assess the impact of integrating undergraduate research experiences on students' overall educational experience.

Objectives:

To assess students' knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs regarding neighborhood inequality and its' relationship to negative health outcomes.

To examine students' perception of confidence in conducting research related to the field of public health.