Students’ Perceptions of Mentoring in a Pharmacy Program


Abstract

Objectives: To explore undergraduate students’ perceived need and benefit of mentoring in a professional pharmacy program, and to determine when in the program they desire mentorship. Desired characteristics of the mentoring relationship were also identified. Methods: A cross-sectional, self-administered survey was distributed to second, third and fourth year professional students enrolled in The University of Mississippi School of Pharmacy. 85.5% of these students participated in the study. Results: Mentor attributes valued by students were experience, supportiveness, communication skills, and integrity. Students reported a preference for female mentors and female students were more likely to report such a preference. Females perceived a greater need for mentoring than males and were more likely to value a mentoring relationship as beneficial. Furthermore, no relationship was found between perceived value of and perceived need of mentoring. No significant relationship was found to exist between students’ cumulative GPA and their need for a mentoring relationship. Students preferred meeting with their mentor individually rather than groups and also preferred selecting their mentor rather than being assigned one. The majority of students preferred developing a mentoring relationship in their third professional year. However, second year professional students preferred developing the relationship during their second professional year. Career and academic development were the most desired outcomes of the mentoring relationship. Implications: By recognizing students’ reported need, and desired characteristics of a mentoring relationship, academic administrators can initiate and structure a pharmacy-mentoring program that benefits students’ academic and career development.