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NPAL is used in a variety of health professions education settings, including pharmacy, medical, and nursing school programs. The NPAL process has demonstrated positive results in medical education. Within medical learners, it positively influenced their learning and near-peer teachers stated it increased their leadership skills and responsibility. There is a significant lack of reporting on how NPAL is utilized in pharmacy education.

METHODS

Participants: a current list of pharmacy program representatives at each pharmacy program on 01-22-2018. Participants had 4 weeks to complete all aspects of the survey emailed to a curricular administrative colleague.

Characterization of Near-Peer-Assisted Learning in U.S. Pharmacy Programs

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OBJECTIVE

To describe the use of near-peer-assisted learning (NPAL) in doctor of pharmacy curricula in the United States.

BACKGROUND

- NPAL is a teaching method that involves junior students receiving training from students who are one or more years their senior in the same program or level of education.
- NPAL is used in a variety of health professions education settings, including pharmacy, medical, and nursing school programs.
- The NPAL process has demonstrated positive results in medical education. Within medical learners, it positively influenced their learning and near-peer teachers stated it increased their leadership skills and responsibility.
- There is a significant lack of reporting on how NPAL is utilized in pharmacy education.

DISCUSSION

This academic study evaluated NPAL utilization in doctor of pharmacy curricula in the United States. Although limited by the number of completed survey responses, our findings suggest that:

- Most institutions utilize NPAL within lab based settings, specifically clinical skills lab and communication lab.
- Programs generally do not allow near-peer teachers to introduce new material to students.
- Near-peer teacher training and selection processes differ significantly between institutions.

CONCLUSIONS

- The majority of respondents utilized NPAL within their curriculum. However, programs reported that they do not intend to continue using NPAL in the future. In part, this may be due to the undefined role of NPAL in pharmacy education.
- Research is needed to better inform the role of NPAL in doctor of pharmacy education. Particular emphasis should be placed on:
  - The educational benefits of NPAL for both learners and near-peer teachers
  - Optimal NPAL curricular placement

REFERENCES


*The authors have no conflicts to report in relation to this work.