

Evaluating Mentoring Needs of Applicants and Recipients of AACP's Pharmacy Practice Section New Investigator Awards

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Introduction

- American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (AACP) New Investigator Award (NIA) has provided start-up funding for early-career pharmacy faculty since 2013
- Eligible NIA applicants must have a terminal degree (PharmD, PhD, or equivalent) and regular full-time faculty appointment as assistant professor at an ACPE-accredited college of pharmacy
- Applicants are required to identify a mentor prior to application submission

Objective

- To evaluate the mentoring needs of previous Pharmacy Practice Section NIA applicants and recipients, and to determine the need for a formal mentorship program for Pharmacy Practice Section NIA applicants

Methods

- 28-item survey (several items had multiple parts) was developed by the AACP Pharmacy Practice SIG Scholarship and Research Committee
 - Approved by Mercer University IRB
- Survey included two sections focused on mentoring during:
 - NIA application process
 - NIA research project (and thus applied only to NIA recipients)
- In Spring 2016, survey was distributed to 84 past NIA applicants and recipients via SurveyMonkey®
 - Reminder email was sent to participants 2 weeks after initial invitation email
- Statistical Analysis: frequency distributions summarized for each survey item

Results

- Response rate: 32% (27 of 84 responders)
- 63% (n=17) reported having a mentor during the NIA application process
 - 12 of 17 responders (70.6%) described relationship as informal
 - Mentors assigned or selected through a formal mentoring program (n=4, 23.5%), voluntary matching program (n=5, 29.4%), or some other mechanism (n=8, 47.1%), eg, similar interests or recommendation by a department chair
 - 7 responders (41.2%) met with mentors on a regular basis, while 6 (35.3%) did not
 - 15 responders (88.2%) believed they benefited from having a mentor during the NIA application process
- Mentors played varying roles in the application process:
 - Informing applicant of the NIA opportunity (n=8)
 - Providing some (n=9) or full (n=6) guidance throughout the application process
- Of 9 respondents who did not have a mentor, all (100%) believed they would have benefited from such a relationship
- See **Table 1** for summary of survey responses regarding mentors during NIA application process (n=25, as data were missing from 2 respondents)
- 9 (36%) respondents were NIA recipients
 - All but 1 had a mentor during NIA-sponsored research project
 - 7 indicated they benefited from having a mentor
- See **Table 2** for summary of NIA recipients' responses regarding mentors during NIA-sponsored research project

Table 1.

During the NIA application process...	Disagree or Strongly Disagree	Neutral	Agree or Strongly Agree
1. A formal mentor would be helpful.	2 (8%)	2 (8%)	21 (84%)
2. A formal mentor who is a member of the AACP Pharmacy Practice SIG would be preferred.	4 (16%)	8 (32%)	13 (52%)
3. A formal mentor should be a past recipient of the NIA.	8 (32%)	10 (40%)	7 (28%)
4. A formal mentor should have a track record of competitive external grant funding.	2 (8%)	3 (12%)	20 (80%)
5. A formal mentor should have a track record of publishing peer-reviewed journal articles.	1 (4%)	1 (4%)	23 (92%)
6. A formal mentor should practice or have expertise in the same field as the NIA applicant (specific to the applicant's research project).	5 (20%)	4 (16%)	16 (64%)
7. A formal mentor should be able to provide guidance on:			
a. Study design	1 (4%)	0	24 (96%)
b. Sampling plan	1 (4%)	2 (8%)	22 (88%)
c. Participant recruitment plan	1 (4%)	1 (4%)	23 (92%)
d. Data collection plan	1 (4%)	1 (4%)	23 (92%)
e. Data analysis plan	1 (4%)	2 (8%)	22 (92%)
f. Budget plan	1 (4%)	1 (4%)	23 (92%)
8. A formal mentor should be available to meet with the NIA applicant on a regular basis during the application process.	1 (4%)	4 (16%)	20 (80%)
9. If you responded "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" to question 11, how often should mentor and applicant meet (please select "Agree" for only 1 option below)?			
a. At least weekly			0
b. At least every 2 weeks			6 (24%)
c. At least once a month			9 (36%)
d. Only as needed			7 (28%)
10. A formal mentor should be a faculty member at the NIA applicant's home institution.	10 (40%)	5 (20%)	10 (40%)

Table 2.

During the yearlong NIA research project...	Disagree or Strongly Disagree	Neutral	Agree or Strongly Agree
1. A formal mentor would be helpful.	0	1 (11.1%)	8 (88.9%)
2. It would be preferable to continue working with the same mentor who assisted during the application process.	0	0	9 (100%)
3. A formal mentor who is a member of the AACP Pharmacy Practice SIG would be preferred.	2 (22.2%)	5 (55.6%)	2 (22.2%)
4. A formal mentor should be a past recipient of the NIA.	3 (33.3%)	4 (44.4%)	2 (22.2%)
5. A formal mentor should have a strong research track record (competitive external grant funding and/or publishing peer-reviewed journal articles).	0	0	9 (100%)
6. A formal mentor should practice or have expertise in the same field as the NIA recipient (specific to the recipient's research project).	1 (11.1%)	2 (22.2%)	6 (66.7%)
7. A formal mentor should be able to provide guidance on:			
a. Study implementation (eg, participant recruitment, data collection)	0	1 (11.1%)	8 (88.9%)
b. Data analysis	0	2 (22.2%)	7 (77.8%)
c. Manuscript preparation and submission for publication	0	2 (22.2%)	7 (77.8%)
d. Presentation of findings (for example, at professional meeting)	0	1 (11.1%)	8 (88.9%)
e. Next steps of research such as pursuit of additional grant funding	0	0	9 (100%)
8. A formal mentor should be available to meet with the NIA recipient on a regular basis.	0	2 (22.2%)	7 (77.8%)
9. A formal mentor should be a faculty member at the NIA recipient's home institution.	1 (11.1%)	1 (11.1%)	7 (77.8%)

Implications

- Respondents were strongly in favor of mentoring, valued the guidance provided by mentors, and favored having Pharmacy Practice SIG mentors during the application process