

ASSESSMENT OF RELATIONSHIP BUILDING BETWEEN PHARMACIST MENTORS AND STUDENT MENTEES IN DIFFERENT SETTINGS DUE TO COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS



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Introduction

In 2012, the CSHP-Sacramento Valley Chapter (CSHP-SV) launched a mentorship program to serve future professionals. The Mentorship Program developed into a student-led program with board advising, incorporating pharmacy students from California Northstate University (CNU) in 2013 at the University of the Pacific (UOP) in 2014. Over the years the program has improved and grown steadily, matching 14 mentors and 17 mentee participants in 2020 following a process of application and screening by the mentorship committee representatives. This year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, restrictions to limit exposure to the virus based on public health recommendations and government state of emergency have necessitated the cancellation of many events, and transitioned face-to-face interactions to virtual events. This study will evaluate if virtual interactions are as effective as traditional in-person activities developed in the previous years of this mentorship program.

Methods

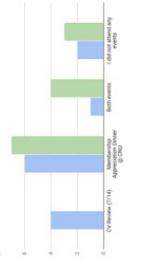
Primary Outcome: The primary outcome of the study is the effectiveness of in-person and virtual program activities measured by mentor and mentee satisfaction of respective events.
Secondary Outcome: The secondary outcome of the study is the perceived effectiveness of in-person and virtual program activities on the professional development of pharmacy students.
Coordination: The CSHP-SV Mentorship Program hosted a total of two official events during the 2019-2020 academic year: one in-person event and one virtual event.
Activities: The CSHP-SV Mentor-Mentee Appreciation Dinner was the first official interaction between the newly matched mentors and mentees. The second event, CV Review Workshop, was held virtually through Zoom® on July 14, 2020. During this 2-hour event, mentors evaluated the curriculum vitae of participating mentees and provided individualized feedback. Outside of official events, mentor-mentee pairings were encouraged to meet to further build professional relationships. The Mentorship Program committee did not facilitate any meetings between pairings beyond the official events coordinated.
Survey: Pharmacist mentors and student mentees were sent via email a 15-16 question electronic survey developed on Google Forms® regarding their satisfaction with the mentorship program over the 2019-2020 year. The survey included four different categories of questions: 1) general demographics, 2) previous history in program, 3) satisfaction of each event, and 4) overall satisfaction of the program. Satisfaction between the two events will be compared to determine the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on interprofessional relationships and professional growth. Satisfaction will be placed on a Likert rating scale from 1-10, with 1 being rated as no satisfaction to 10 being extreme satisfaction. Data regarding program satisfaction from previous years will be compiled and compared. Differences between the 2019-2020 year and previous years will be assessed and analyzed to determine possible reasons for any change in satisfaction and possible future direction of the mentorship program.

RESULTS AND TRENDS

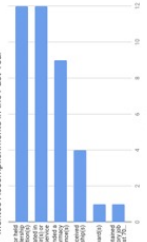
27 program participants (14 mentors and 13 mentees) responded to the 2020-satisfaction survey. Program and event satisfaction were measured on a scale from 1-10 (1= extremely dissatisfied, 10= extremely satisfied). Mentors reported an average satisfaction of 9.2 and 9.5 for the Mentor-Mentee Appreciation Dinner and CV Review, respectively. Mentees reported a similar average satisfaction of 9.8 and 8.2 for the two events respectively as well. Event attendance varied for both program mentors and mentees, with 2 mentees and 3 mentors reporting that they did not attend any events.

	MENTOR	MENTEE
Mentor-Mentee Appreciation Dinner Satisfaction	9.2	9.8
CV Review Satisfaction	9.5	8.2

Mentee and Mentor 2020 Event Attendance



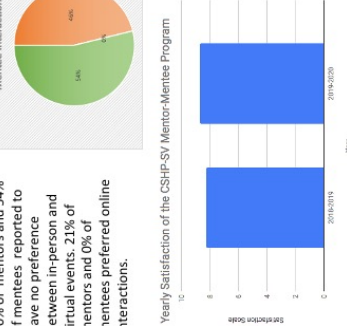
Mentee Accomplishments in the Past Year



All 13 mentees who responded to the survey reported various accomplishments throughout the past year. 12 out of 13 mentees stated that this was an increase since the previous year. On a scale from 1-10 (1 = not helpful at all, 10 = extremely helpful), mentees reported an average of 8.9, in terms of how helpful their mentor has been to their professional development.

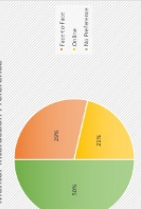
50% of mentors and 54% of mentees reported to have no preference between in-person and virtual events. 21% of mentors and 0% of mentees preferred online interactions.

Yearly Satisfaction of the CSHP-SV Mentor-Mentee Program

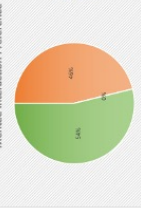


Overall average satisfaction for both mentors and mentees in the 2018-2019 academic year was 8.25. In 2019-2020, the overall average satisfaction was 8.27.

Mentor Interaction Preference



Mentee Interaction Preference



Discussion

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, it was uncertain how new types of communication would affect interpersonal relationships. Our primary outcome results indicated that among mentors, the satisfaction of these relationships is relatively the same between the online CV Review and the Mentor-Mentee Appreciation Dinner. Majority of the mentors had no preference between online or in-person platforms and those that had a preference were split amongst the two. However, a surprising result showed that mentees who did have a preference had all preferred an in-person event while mentors with preferences were split between the in-person and virtual event. The mentors' preference could be due to COVID and belonging to a high risk group or having busier schedules. Further evaluation of this is required.

Mentor and mentee satisfaction of the overall program was analyzed and compared to the previous year. Results showed a slight increase in satisfaction during the 2019-2020 academic year as compared to 2018-2019. During both years the program hosted two official events for mentors and mentees, but the format of the events differed from this year. This indicates that as long as there is ample opportunity for mentors and mentees to meet, the satisfaction of the program will remain the same or increase regardless of an online platform or an in-person one. In addition, despite sudden changes this year, mentees were still able to obtain an increased number of professional accomplishments compared to the previous year, with the assistance of their mentors.

Future Direction

The goal of the CSHP-SV Mentorship Program is to build connections between students and pharmacists to encourage professional development and provide guidance. The program has grown and adapted for an increasing number of participants and changing circumstances in order to maintain a high level of mentor and mentee satisfaction. Public health restrictions as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic have led to the development of virtual events for professional growth and development of future professionals.

The results of this study provided insight on how to improve the CSHP Mentor-Mentee program to provide beneficial events and form lasting interprofessional relationships in the future. Results from the study showed modest reception of incorporating virtual events in the upcoming year. In addition, the program successfully encouraged professional development amongst students, as they reported an overall increase in professional accomplishments over the past year of participation. According to the survey, 14.3% of mentors reported meeting with their mentees more than 5 times outside of official program events, while 28.6% did not meet with their mentees in the past year. Possible ways to increase mentor and mentee interaction is to send surveys periodically throughout the year to gauge and encourage interaction, as well as increasing initial official events, virtual and in-person, to build a stronger interprofessional relationships between the mentors and mentees. Due to the possibility of the pandemic extending throughout the next academic year, virtual events will continue and further data will be collected. Potential mentee student input will be collected in the beginning stages of the program to increase mentee satisfaction and efficacy of program activities while public restrictions remain in place in the upcoming year.