

Paramedic Student Perspectives Toward Evidence-Based Medicine and Research Methods

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Introduction. There is a growing emphasis for students in all fields of medicine to become familiar with and engage in research. Medical and nursing schools in the United States have begun implementing robust curriculum changes to reflect this, and opportunity is growing for paramedic schools to implement similar changes. This study aims to better understand how paramedic students view research and determine potential barriers to entry for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) providers in the research process.

Methods. A survey assessing student demographics and perspectives toward evidence-based medicine and research methods was sent to four midwestern paramedic schools.

Results. Nineteen responses were obtained. Respondents were a mean age of 26.6 years old (SD 9.8) and mostly White (N = 15, 79%) men (N = 10, 53%) with an average of five years (SD 8.4) of EMS experience. Although every respondent agreed that prehospital Emergency Medicine research is important, 95% (N = 18) had no previous research experience and most participants (N = 10, 53%) only read research a couple of times per year. When asked about barriers to participating in research, most (N = 11, 58%) identified a lack of time; others identified not knowing how to find or understand research (N = 8, 42%), and discomfort with involving a patient in a clinical trial, even after proper training (N = 10, 53%).

Conclusions. These data suggest that paramedic students continue to face barriers to understanding and participating in research. Given the rapidly changing landscape of medical practice, it is imperative that EMS providers are included in research education.

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