Background

- In 2018, the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (AACP) released a strategic plan that had a goal that targeted expanding national pharmacy pipeline development programs.
- This could be in response to the declining number of applicants to Schools of Pharmacy since 2013.
- In 2020, three PharmD Candidate at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville School of Pharmacy created a similar program under the supervision of a faculty member
  - The goal of this program was to teach students interested in pharmacy about building a professional image and learning about different focus areas of pharmacy.
  - The objective of this study is to obtain a quality assurance of the implementation of the Pharmacy Careers Program, focusing on knowledge of focus topics and perception of completion of the course.

Methods

- The Course: Six 1.5-Hour modules given in person or virtually (asynchronously) offered to undergraduate students (aged 18-21) interested in pharmacy.
  - Focus Topics: Pathways in Pharmacy, Networking and Professionalism, Communication, Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD), Immunizations, and Diabetes.
  - Research was conducted through pre- and post-program surveys and pre- and post module surveys.
  - Pre- and post-program surveys: Assessed demographics of students, reasons for taking part in the program and likelihood to choose a career in healthcare/pharmacy.
  - Pre- and post-module surveys: 4 questions each that asked 2 knowledge-based questions and 2 Likert-scale questions to assess comfort with the focus topics. The same survey was given before and after each module.
  - Participation in modules was at no charge to students. Participation in the modules was at no charge to students. Participation in the program was at no charge to students.
  - Students were required to attend at least 4 of the 6 modules for career in healthcare/pharmacy.

Results

- In the state of Illinois, what information is required to be said to the patient? 5 (4-5) 5 (4-5)
- I would feel comfortable knowing how to network/ask for resources. 3 (1-5) 4 (2-5)
- I have a good understanding of the role of pharmacists in the treatment of diabetes. 3 (1-4) 5 (4-5)
- I understand what impact appropriate attire can have on a professional environment. 5 (3-5) 5 (4-5)
- I understand the difference between Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD), heartburn and acid reflux. 9 (69%) 9 (69%)
- There are not much change in likelihood to choose a career in healthcare or pharmacy from pre- to post-program survey, but this could be that already motivated students attended the program.
- There was little to no change in people who were pharmacy technicians before and after program, showing that the program did not push students to become technicians.
- Students tended to have larger differences on their pre-and post-survey comfort level questions on disease state topic modules compared to modules focused on building professional skills.
- A larger percentage of students answered correctly on post-survey knowledge-based questions compared to pre-survey (with 2 exceptions), showing a gain in knowledge from the modules.
- While participation in the surveys decreased with each module, 18 out of 30 students attended at least 4 of the modules, showing participation in the modules did not decrease.
- Limitations of very small sample size, ability to offers the programs were 6 modules across different focus areas of pharmacy.

Discussion

- There is not much change in likelihood to choose a career in healthcare or pharmacy from pre- to post-program survey, but this could be that already motivated students attended the program.
- There was little to no change in people who were pharmacy technicians before and after program, showing that the program did not push students to become technicians.
- Students tended to have larger differences on their pre-and post-survey comfort level questions on disease state topic modules compared to modules focused on building professional skills.
- A larger percentage of students answered correctly on post-survey knowledge-based questions compared to pre-survey (with 2 exceptions), showing a gain in knowledge from the modules.
- While participation in the surveys decreased with each module, 18 out of 30 students attended at least 4 of the modules, showing participation in the modules did not decrease.
- Limitations of very small sample size, ability to offers the programs as multiple times leading to decrease in survey participation and survey bias.

Conclusion

- Overall, very high rates of satisfaction were reported among students.
- If given again, moving modules closer together, giving more offerings of each module, and offering the program to younger or more students would increase overall participation.
- I recommend more studies be done with this program in the future to compile more data for analysis.