



Reflections on College-Level Research for Baccalaureate-MD Students in the United States

Leonard Kuan-Pei Wang¹ · Praneet Sai Paidisetty²

Accepted: 13 January 2023 / Published online: 18 January 2023

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To the editor:

Combined baccalaureate-MD (e.g., BA/MD and BS/MD) programs are niche pathways that offer high school students conditional acceptance into medical school. As students in a combined BS/MD program, we read with great interest Lin and colleagues' report, which sought to characterize research perceptions among college-level students in combined BA/MD programs [1]. Below, we present anecdotal descriptions of experiences at our undergraduate institution, which we believe speak to the efficacy of faculty mentorship programs.

In our accelerated BS/MD program, two semesters of undergraduate research credit were required to matriculate to medical school. We found that the flexible yet structured mentorship offered by our program was beneficial for our personal and professional development. While P.S.P. explored preventative measures for catheter associated urinary tract infections, L.K.W. conducted environmental conservation research in the Galápagos Islands. The laboratory setting helped P.S.P. learn the fundamentals of the scientific method and analytical thinking, allowing him to create a dynamic mental framework that he still uses to conduct research projects as a medical student. The cultural competency and understanding of the multidimensional factors that influence health that L.K.W. developed when living with a host family in the Galápagos continue to guide his population health research and his current pursuit of a Master of Public Health degree in medical school.

Combined BS/MD programs that support faculty mentorship and research can be highly beneficial for the personal and professional development of students. Through our experiences in undergraduate research as part of our seven-year BS/MD program, we gained valuable skills and knowledge that we continue to use in medical school. Our anecdotes highlight the importance of such research programs in preparing students for success in medical school and beyond.

Declarations

Conflict of Interest The authors declare no competing interests.

Reference

1. Lin JC, Kang C, Amiri L, Clark MA, Greenberg PB. Perceptions of research and research-oriented careers among college-level baccalaureate-MD students in the United States. *Med Sci Educ.* 2022;32(6):1263–8. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40670-022-01619-5>.

Publisher's Note Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

✉ Leonard Kuan-Pei Wang
Lkwang@utmb.edu

¹ John Sealy School of Medicine, The University of Texas Medical Branch, 301 University Blvd, Galveston, TX, USA

² McGovern Medical School, University of Texas Health Science Center, Houston, TX, USA