

OP09

Trends in research grant applications and outcomes among students in the United Kingdom: a national self-reported cross-sectional study

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Cite: Journal of Global Medicine 2024, 4:S1 - <http://dx.doi.org/10.51496/jogm.v4.S1.183>

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Abstract

Research funding disparities contribute to clinical-academic workforce inequalities [1–3]. Hence, our study explores the association between student demographics and research grant application rates and outcomes among UK medical students. This is a national multicentre cross-sectional survey of UK medical students in the 2020–21 academic year. Multiple zero-inflated negative binomial regression and generalized linear model (binomial distribution; logit link) were utilized to investigate the association between student demographics, number of grant applications submitted, and successful grant applications (yes or no). *P*-values less than a Bonferroni-corrected significance level of $0.05/36 = 0.0014$ were statistically significant.

A total of 1,528 students participated from 36 medical schools. A total of 151 respondents (9.9%) had applied for research grants. Black students submitted applications 2.90 times more often than white students [Incident rate ratio (IRR): 2.90, 95% confidence interval (CI): 1.37–6.16], with no ethnic disparity in the odds of successful applications. Gender did not influence application rates significantly ($P = 0.248$), but women were 4.61 times more likely to secure a grant than men [odds ratio: 4.61, 95% CI: 2.04–10.4]. Being a PubMed-indexed author was associated with increased grant application submission rates [IRR: 3.61, 95% CI: 2.20–5.92] while conducting more research was associated with greater odds of securing a grant [odds ratio: 1.42, 95% CI: 1.17–1.73].

Although black students submitted more applications, ethnicity did not influence success rates. Gender did not influence application rates, but women were more successful. These findings underscore the need for strategies supporting women and underrepresented students for continued academic achievement after graduation.

Keywords: *research; research grants; students; United Kingdom; medical schools; ethnic disparity; academic inequality*

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