

Black Men in White Coats

Discussion guide

The American Medical Association, which proudly supports the powerful documentary film *Black Men in White Coats*, is committed to increasing medical school admissions among historically excluded and marginalized groups.

Following the screening of *Black Men in White Coats*, institutions can use this guide to organize facilitated discussions on the topic of increasing diversity in medicine. Based on your audience, these questions can be used for both panel and group discussions. We recommend that for a one-hour discussion you select between five and 10 questions from below and we welcome you to adapt or modify the questions and/or objectives based on the unique characteristics of your audience.

[Click here to learn more about the AMA's work to increase diversity in the physician workforce.](#)

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this discussion, participants will be able to:

- Describe issues shared in the documentary that inform and influence Black men's perspectives on health care
- Outline structural issues that contribute to the low number of Black men in medicine
- Describe the complexities and challenges Black men encounter while pursuing careers in medicine

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

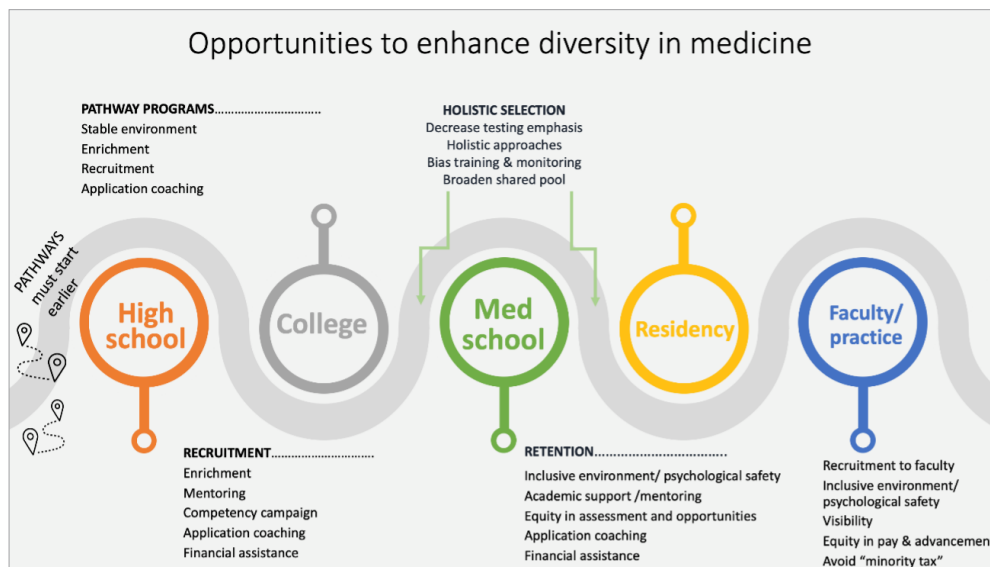
Questions regarding factors that inform and influence Black men's perspectives on health care:

1. Dr. Okorodudu stated, "If you don't have a seat at the table, you're on the menu. Right now, Black men don't have a seat at the table." Does this resonate with you? Why or why not?
2. Dr. Otis Anderson told a story about his childhood friend being brought into the ER and not getting immediate attention because of gang tattoos. Can you share a time when you needed to advocate for a patient who was not getting the quality care they deserved because of bias?
3. When was the first time you saw a Black male physician? Do you recall? How do you think that has shaped your views about medicine and health care?
4. Former Surgeon General Dr. Jerome Adams refutes the premise that a lack of personal responsibility is the driver of health inequities, stating, "The choices people make are 100% determined by the choices they have around them." What are your thoughts regarding this statement?
5. Former Surgeon General Dr. Jerome Adams states, "Your zip code is more important than your genetic code in determining your overall health." What do you think about this comment? Considering the regions around your school or medical center, would this statement hold true? In what ways have you seen this play out (or not) with patients in various zip codes?

Questions regarding structural issues that contribute to the low number of Black men in medicine:

1. The documentary highlights that "Approximately 100 less Black men applied to medical school in 2014 than in 1978." What is your reaction to this fact? Why do you think this is and what do you think can be done to address this reality?
2. Regarding medical school, Dr. Okorodudu asks: "Are they functioning as stewards for the country's doctors or more like businesses? Because those are going to lead to two different outcomes." What do you think about Dr. Okorodudu's question? What do you think the two different outcomes would be?

3. Below is a roadmap for opportunities to enhance diversity in medicine. What do you see in your current environment that supports increasing diversity in medicine? Do you think it is working? Why or why not?



Questions regarding complexities and challenges Black men encounter while pursuing careers in medicine:

1. What did you think of this comment from the film: "Athletes get more recognition than smart kids?" Do you think this is true? If so, how can we give smart kids more recognition?
2. In the film Dr. Amubieya states, "For a young person of color who is thinking about medicine and has no people in their community doing it, no resources. No matter where you come from, this is a real possibility. We want you." How does it make you feel? Do you believe it is a real possibility to become a physician regardless of identity, background and resources?
3. What are your thoughts on factoring in a candidate's life circumstances when considering admission criteria for medical school? How could screening and review for admission be more holistic?
4. Consider the comment made by Dr. Wale Amubieya, "The weight of being one of the few Black male doctors in the medical center is tangible. There is definitely the feeling that you are representing more than just yourself." Have you ever felt that you were representing more than just yourself at school, at work or in your community?
5. In the documentary, a study of graduate medical education was cited that found there were 234 people dismissed from residency in 2016 and of those, 20% were African American. This finding is significant when one considers African Americans represent less than 10% of total residents in most specialties. The documentary identifies discrimination, burnout, depression and the environment as causes of this. What do you think of this finding?

Questions regarding the film's premise that improving the diversity of the physician workforce is imperative to improving health equity:

1. What do you think of the connection Dr. Okorodudu makes between Black men having the lowest life expectancy and representing only 2% of physicians nationwide?
2. In the film, Dr. Wally Hooser, a white physician, stated that, "So much communication between a patient and a doctor is non-verbal. I, as a white person, am good at reading white people, but to think I'm as good at reading a Black person as another Black person, I don't think so." Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not? How does this manifest in clinical situations for you and your colleagues?
3. In the film, Dr. Valerie Montgomery Rice of Morehouse School of Medicine stated, "There are several medical schools that do not have any Black men in their classrooms. When that is the case, and we are in a learning environment, there are going to be different conclusions drawn about how to care for people if there are not diverse people around the table. That is why we need Black men in medical school." What do you think about this statement?