Lack of Underrepresented Minorities in Cardiothoracic Anesthesiology Fellowship Education

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Abstract: Adult cardiothoracic anesthesiology (ACTA) is a field committed to leadership, innovation, and excellence. As leaders in the perioperative space, cardiac anesthesiologists have an opportunity to be leaders in recognizing and harnessing the power of diversity in their professional environment. While it is not yet a specialty that embodies diversity in its membership, cardiothoracic anesthesiology could serve as a model to other subspecialties for how to implement actionable change and successfully create a more equitable professional landscape. The demographic data for ACTA demonstrates a lack of racial and ethnic diversity in the subspecialty. The 2019-2020 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) program data reported that of the 220 ACTA fellowship trainees in accredited programs, thirty-six identified as Asian, seven as Hispanic, six as Black, one as Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and zero as Native American/Native Alaskan. While discussions of the need for diversity are not new in the last ten years, the racial and ethnic demographics in ACTA largely have remained unchanged and may even have become slightly less diverse. Multiple strategies can be implemented to improve representation of underrepresented minorities in ACTA fellowships including improving the pipeline, recruitment, and application evaluation processes; as well as evaluating the overall work environment and access to diverse mentors.