



Puerto Rico Biomedical Research Program

IDENTIFYING OUR FUTURE BIOMEDICAL INVESTIGATORS

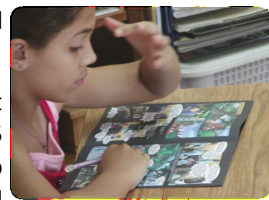
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Studies in science education highlight the importance of informal learning to stimulate the interest of students in science. The Puerto Rico Biomedical Research Education Program (PR-BREP) was initiated in 2003 through a NCCR-SEPA grant (R25 RR17415) with the goal to expose Hispanic/Puerto Rican children to biomedical research.

The program primarily focuses on two initiatives a Comic Book Series and a Summer Biomedical Internship Program. Special emphasis is given in both activities to increase the awareness of middle and high schools students on health disparities in Hispanic/Latino groups such as diabetes, heart diseases, hypertension, and HIV.

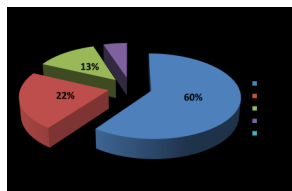
Since the publication of the first comic book in 2004, over 75 presentations have been made to introduce students to biomedical research through the BioMed Battle Team comic book series. A total of 2,681 students and 55 schools have been impacted by this activity across the Island. In addition, over 10,000 comic books have been distributed in health exhibits, scientific fairs and other public educational activities.

The Summer Internship targets middle and high school students, providing hands-on experiences in biomedical research, and introducing local



biomedical scientists. Nineteen summer internships have been held since 2003 with applications tripling the enrollment capacity. A total 412 students from 35 schools, representing six of the seven School Regions across Puerto Rico have participated in the Internships.

Professional surveys and evaluations confirmed the positive impact of these tools in developing the interest of Puerto Rican students in biomedical sciences. Ninety-two percent (92%) of the activities have been rated either excellent or good by the students. The hands-on experiments utilizing molecular biology techniques (i.e. DNA extraction) received the highest scores from the students. More than two-thirds of the students (78%) expressed a desire to repeat the internship even though the activity is limited to one year. A group of exceptional students have returned as volunteers and have performed an outstanding job in promoting and sustaining the internship.



by the numbers ...

- > **75** number of presentations at middle and high schools
- > **2,681** number of students that read the comic books at school presentations
- > **10,200** number of comic books distributed since 2004
- > **17** number of summer biomedical internships
- > **412** number of students have participated in the internships
- > **55** number of middle and high schools participating in BREP activities

2003-2014

Collaborators and Partners

