

Abstract Submitted
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The Longitudinal STEM Identity Trajectories of Middle School Girls who Participated in a Single-Sex Informal STEM Education Program¹ ROXANNE HUGHES, National High Magnetic Field Laboratory —

This study examined the longitudinal effects of participation in an all-girls STEM summer camp on young women's interest in STEM fields and motivation to pursue these fields. The SciGirls camp has been in existence since 2006, with its goal of providing a safe space for young women to explore STEM careers and strengthen their interest in these careers. Over 166 middle school age girls have participated in the program since it began in 2006. Of those participants, 60 responded to at least one of the follow up surveys that are sent every three years – 2009 and 2012. The surveys attempt to determine participants' level of interest in STEM. The survey was qualitative in nature and asked open ended questions. Results indicated that the camp had a positive effect on participants' perceptions of scientists and their work. This study adds to the literature that looks at the longitudinal impacts of informal STEM educational programs that expose young women to female scientist role models and mentors. This study supports the research that claims that exposing young women at an early age to science role models can positively alter their perception of science careers which can eventually increase the number of women who pursue these careers. This increase is important at a time when men still outnumber women in many science and engineering fields.

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