

Teaching How to Care for Trans/Gender Non-Conforming Patients: It Is Easier Than You Think

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BACKGROUND

- Transgender and gender non-conforming patients (GNC) are vulnerable due to financial, systemic, and social barriers to care.
- Medical trainees are uncomfortable caring for this population, partly due to lack of education.

OBJECTIVES

- To improve health practitioner communication comfort and skills around treating trans/GNC patients.
- To improve participant understanding of the importance of language in creating an inclusive environment for all patients and how it can be a barrier for transgender/GNC patients.

METHODS

- Second year physician assistant students attended a one-hour lecture followed by a one-hour patient panel.
- The lecture discussed bias; the difference between sex, gender, gender expression, and sexual identity; ways to create safe, comfortable clinical environment; and terms that can be used in place of gendered language.
- Students completed the survey one week before and immediately following the session.

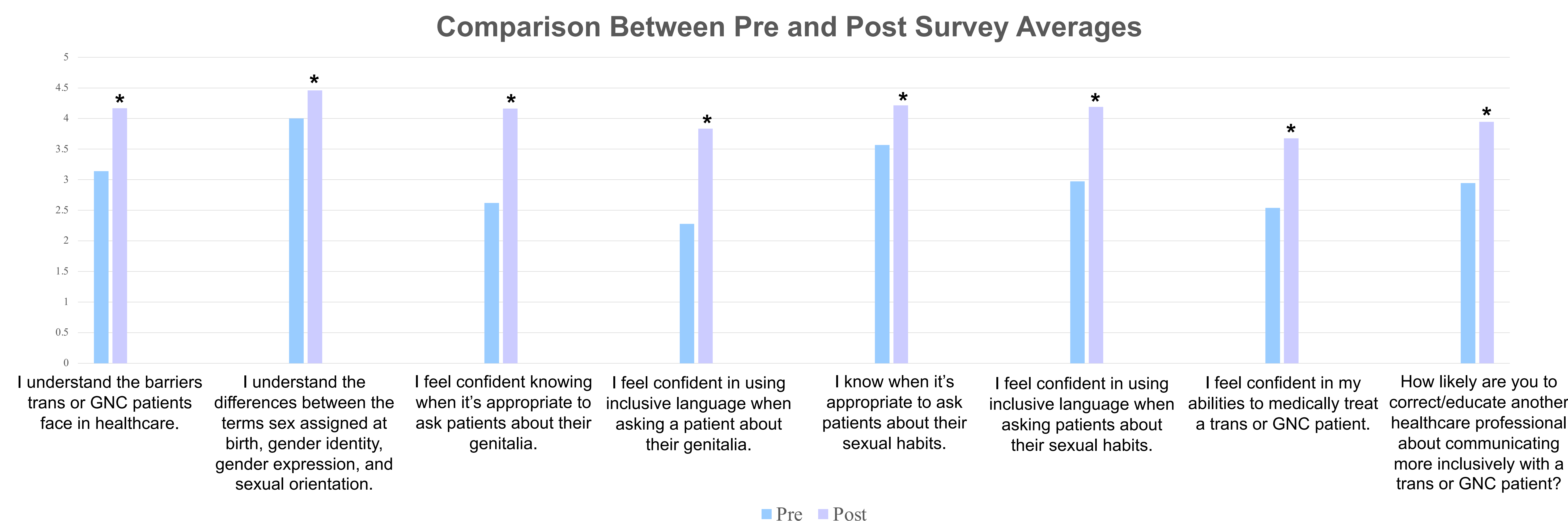
CONCLUSIONS

- A one-time lecture and patient panel increased PA student subjective confidence in caring for transgender and GNC patients as well as educating other health professionals.
- Student confidence increased regardless of being friends with someone transgender/GNC or having attended previous trainings.
- Students report understanding terms prior to training, possibly indicating a lack of confidence in using the terms or over-evaluation of their understanding.

EVALUATION

- Each participant was asked for feedback after each practical exam.
- Likert scale (1-5) was utilized.
- Descriptive statistics and t-test with two sample variance were used to compare pre and post survey averages for each question.

RESULTS



Student Demographics

Experience		No (%)
Friends with someone transgender or GNC	15	(41%)
Previous trainings	11	(30%)
Friends + previous trainings	4	(11%)
Gender Identity		No (%)
Female	31	(84%)
Male	6	(16%)
Transgender/GNC	0	
Age		No (%)
23-24	6	(16%)
25-26	20	(54%)
27-28	8	(22%)
29-30	2	(5%)
No response	1	(3%)

- 41 PA students completed pre-surveys; 10% lost to follow-up.
- Understanding barriers to care (pre/post difference 1.028, $p < 0.001$) and terms (pre-survey mean of 4, $p = 0.027$) indicated a ceiling effect due to high initial values.
- Control questions (whether a student had interacted with a transgender or GNC person or seen one in clinic) did not show significant change.
- Self-efficacy measure regarding confidence all showed significant difference.
- The final outcome – whether a participant would educate a fellow healthcare professional – found significant change with mean difference of 1.
- Subjective reports from students after the session described feeling more confident when treating transgender patients in clinic and a desire to learn more about caring for this underserved population.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- Determine if self-efficacy measures continue to show an increase over time.
- Evaluate if integrating patient cases into the future curriculum would allow students to practice skills learned during the training.
- Determine through evaluative quiz whether students understood concepts.
- Extending this study to medical student groups and residents.

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