

Student-Led Course on Community Resources for Patients with Disabilities



Kyle Lien, B.S.¹, Abigail Weisse, B.S. ¹, Nora Newcomb, M.D. ¹, Aishwarya Vuppala, B.S. ¹, Franklin Sun, B.S. ¹, Shannon McCarthy, B.S. ¹, Anita Narkhede, B.S. ¹, Marjorie Fitzsimmons, M.D. ¹, Vinita Kiluk, M.D.^{1,2}

¹USF Morsani College of Medicine, Tampa, FL; ²Department of Pediatrics, Tampa General Hospital

Background:

- Persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) face significant disparities in healthcare due to factors within the healthcare system.¹
- Healthcare providers can feel fear and anxiety caring for persons with disabilities (PWDs) which may stem from inadequate formal education on disability.²
- Most medical students report insufficient competency in treating PWDs with 48% reporting no coverage of disability awareness in their curriculum. ^{3, 4}
- Disability curricula with the involvement of community partners have been shown to improve medical student knowledge and ability to work with PWDs.⁵

Objectives:

- Implement and evaluate the effectiveness of a didactic session in improving knowledge of and confidence in navigating IDD-inclusive community resources for PWDs among medical students.

Methods:

- 14 third-year medical students attended a 2-hour didactic discussing resources available to PWDs through two community programs: TechOWL and Arc of Lehigh and Northampton Counties.
- Didactics were developed with and administered by representatives from these organizations
- Students’ awareness of and confidence in navigating community resources was assessed via a 4-point Likert scale
- Knowledge of community resources was assessed via multiple-choice questions in pre- and post-surveys.

Literature cited:

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Preliminary Results: 11 students completed both the pre-course and first post-course surveys as of 03/18/2025. Results from the 3 month follow up survey are pending. Significant differences found in pre and post assessment rating of awareness of available resources and confidence and willingness in recommending resources. Significant differences in accuracy of found for only 2/5 knowledge check questions.

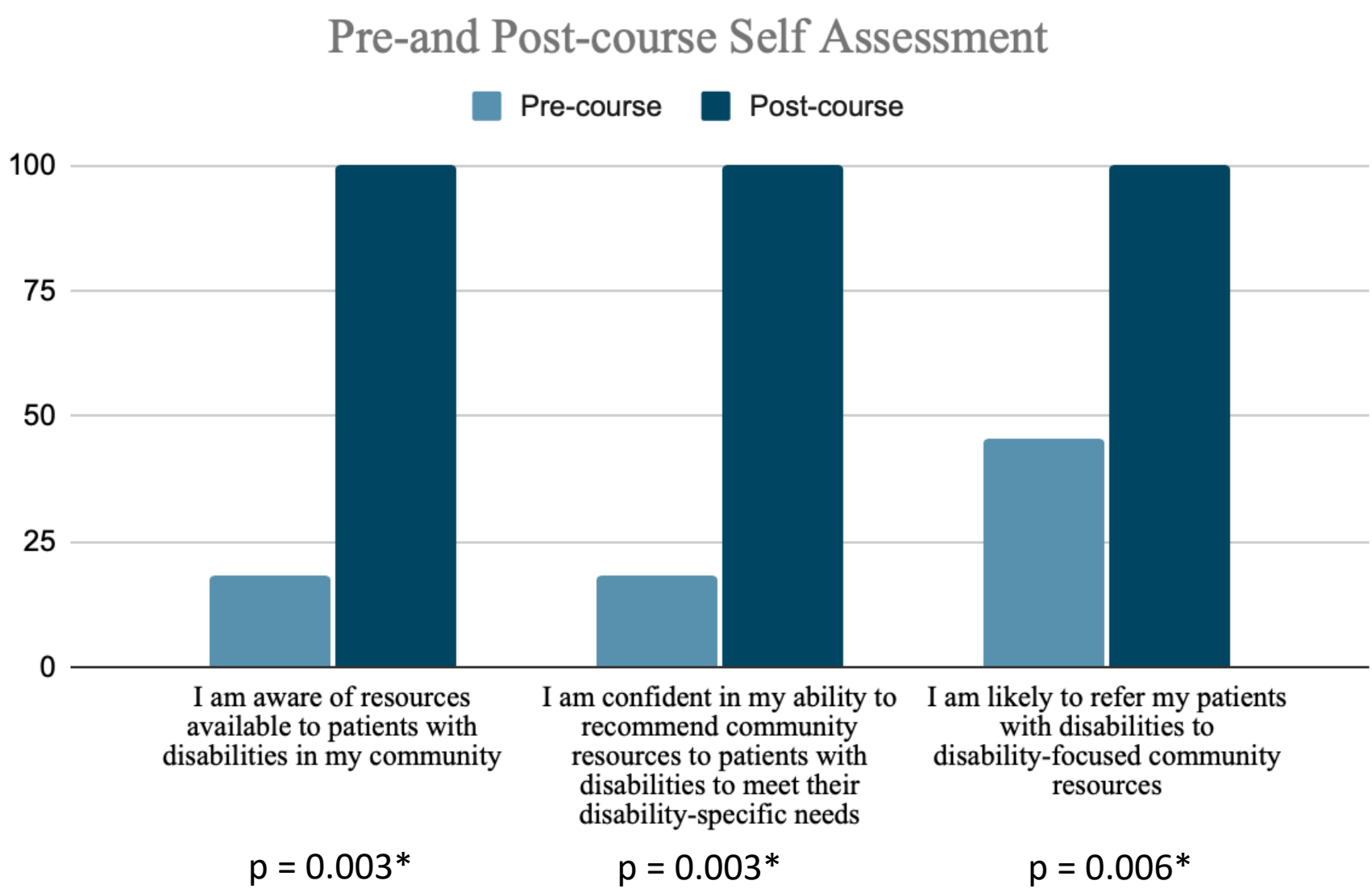


Figure 1: Percent of Students who agreed (Likert scale 3-4) with the given statements on surveys administered before and after the course

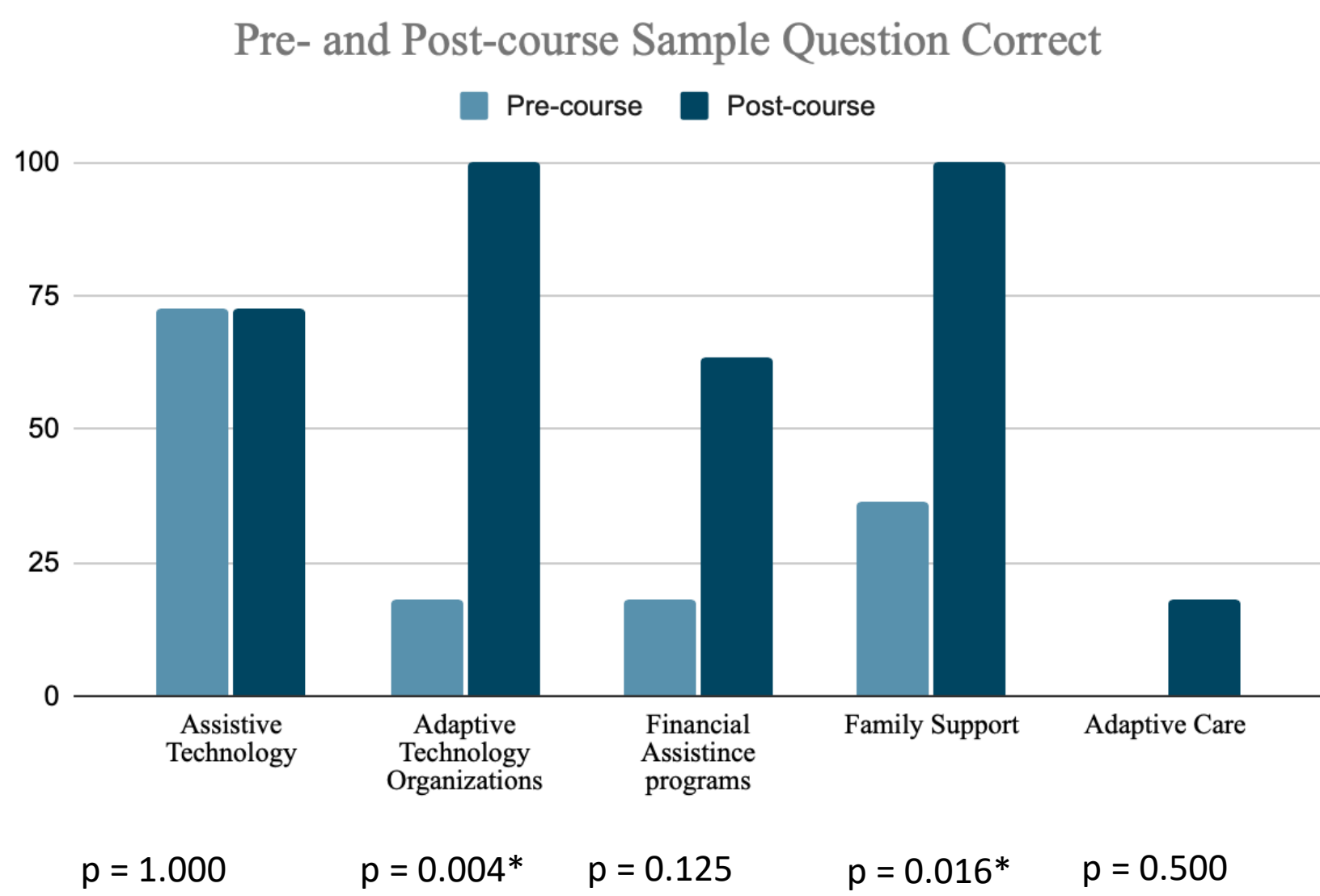


Figure 2: Percent of students who correctly answered sample questions on the listed topics before and after the course

* = p-value is statistically significant (<0.05)

Discussion and Future Directions:

- There was an improvement in awareness of community resources within limited sample size.
- Novel approach involving IDD-inclusive community partners in the creation and execution of disability curricula.
- Follow-up 3 months post-course to evaluate medical students’ utilization of community-based disability resources is being collected. Consider follow-up at 6 months or 1 year interval.
- Improve knowledge check questions or coverage of content.
- Adapting similar curricular initiatives with community organizations in different regions.

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