



## Background

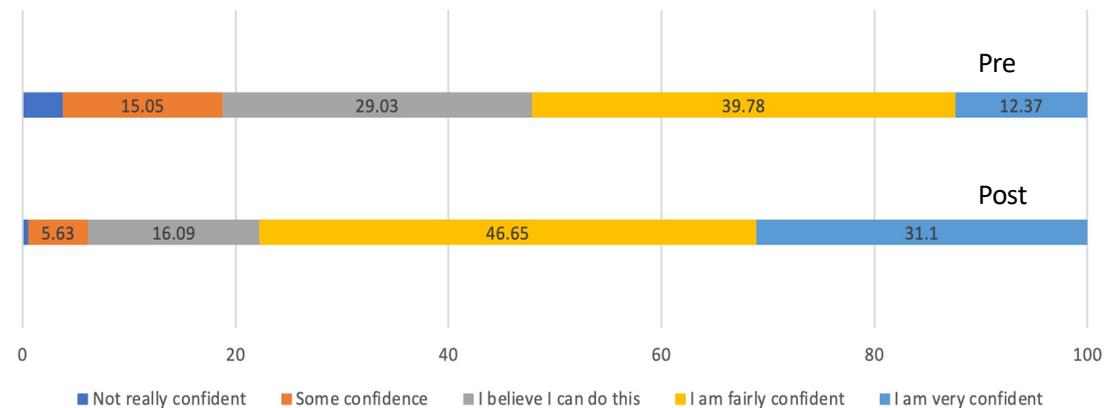
- By 2030, it is projected 1/5 people in the US will be 65 years old and over.
- There is a lack of geriatric providers and a growing need for providers who have geriatric specific training.<sup>1</sup>
- Student attitudes towards older adults and communication skills benefit from geriatric specific curriculum/training.<sup>1,2</sup>
- COAST-IT was developed to address a lack of health professional student's interactions with geriatric patients and social isolation in older adults.
- AIM: To assess the efficacy of COAST-IT on improving student attitudes towards older adults and communication skills with this population.

## Methods

- Older adults were recruited from various community facilities and were randomly paired with students.
- Students (NP, MD, PharmD, DDS) made social phone calls once every 1-2 weeks to their older adult partners (OAP).
- Program started in the summer of 2021 with NP and pharmacy students and has expanded to the medical and dental school.
- Students were surveyed before and after participating in the COAST-IT program every semester.
- The survey included perceptual questions and free text responses to assess knowledge, communication, and attitudes towards older adults.
- A chi-square test was utilized to evaluate for statistical significance between aggregate pre- and post- response.

## Results

Rate your level of communication confidence with respect to taking/interviewing an older patient



- 375 students have participated and responded to the survey.
- Stress while talking to an older adult person was reduced (18.4% to 10.67%).
- Better able to define ageism (74.1 % to 80.3% of students picking correct answer).

## Progress to Date and Future Directions

- Expected results
  - The next round of data collection is set for June 2022.
  - We are expecting to collect data from students of different health profession programs such as RN, NP, DDS, and MD.
- Progressing to a standardized, validated survey
  - The initial survey was primarily used for internal program evaluation.
  - As of January 2022, COAST-IT is progressing to the use of the COCOA-24 Item scale to comprehensively evaluate impact on ageism.
- Future directions: Expanding to evaluation of impact on the OAP

## Conclusions

- Caring for the growing older adult population will require interprofessional teams with well-developed communication skills.
- Many geriatric focused curriculum interventions are not longitudinal programs.
- The COAST-IT program provides students a way to practice building longitudinal relationships that foster empathy and improved attitudes towards older adults as well as practicing communication skills with real patients early in their training.

## References

1. Thompson, S., Metcalfe, K., Bonney, K., Merriman, C., Flynn, L. C., Alg, G. S., Bothwell, H., Forde-Johnston, C., Puffett, E., Hardy, C., Wright, L., & Beale, J. (2020). Interprofessional Education in geriatric medicine: Towards best practice. A controlled before-after study of medical and nursing students. *BMJ Open*, 10(1).
2. Ross, L., Jennings, P., & Williams, B. (2017). Improving health care student attitudes toward older adults through educational interventions: A systematic review. *Gerontology & Geriatrics Education*, 39(2), 193-213.

## Disclosures

None