



# Medical Students' Perspective on the Clinical Skills II Curriculum

Monica R. Sheridan, Robert K. Oye, MD  
David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA



## Background

- The longitudinal clinical skills (CS) curriculum at David Geffen School of Medicine (DGSOM) teaches first and second-year medical students how to perform a physical exam and develop a differential diagnosis using the relevant findings.
- Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, students in the Class of 2023 were given the option of completing the course in-person or virtually.

## Objectives

- The present study aims to measure medical students' confidence levels in performing physical exam maneuvers and ability to develop a differential diagnosis before and after completion of the second-year clinical skills curriculum.
- Secondly, the study aims to decipher any differences in student confidence levels for students who completed the course in-person vs virtually.

## Methods

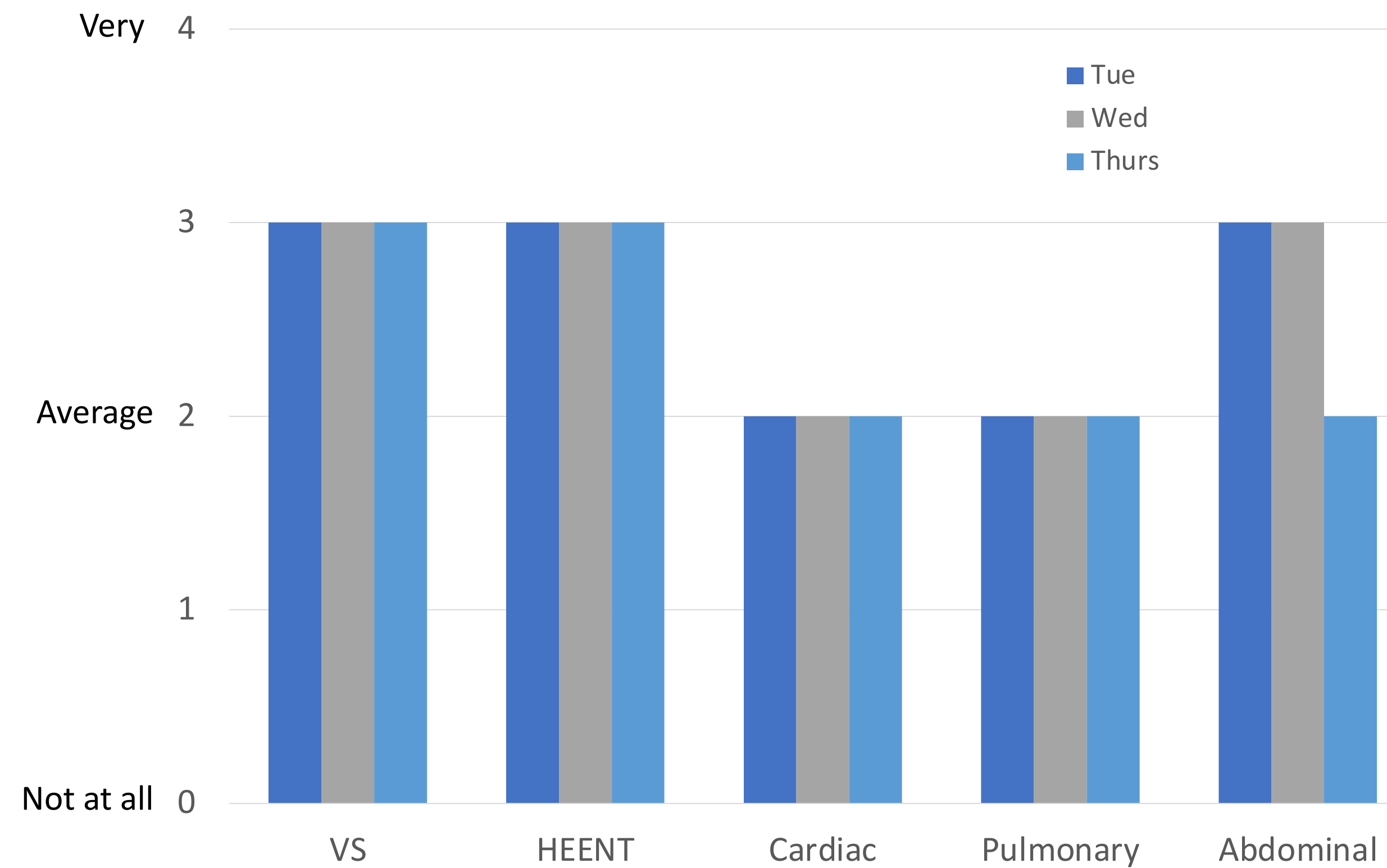
- Participants took a one-time, online, anonymous, and voluntary survey.
- 68 second-year medical students at DGSOM completed the survey from Nov 2020 to Feb 2021.
- Students rated their confidence on a 5-point scale in the following areas:
  - performing an overall physical exam before and after CS
  - performing subsections of the physical exam (vital signs (VS), HEENT, cardiovascular, pulmonary, and abdominal)
  - ability to generate a differential diagnosis before and after CS
- Students were given an opportunity to share feedback anonymously.
- IRB exemption obtained; IRB# 20-001766.
- Students identified barriers to learning clinical skills.
- Subgroups were analyzed based on assigned CS instruction day, with Tue/Wed groups being in-person, and Thurs being entirely virtual.

## Conclusions

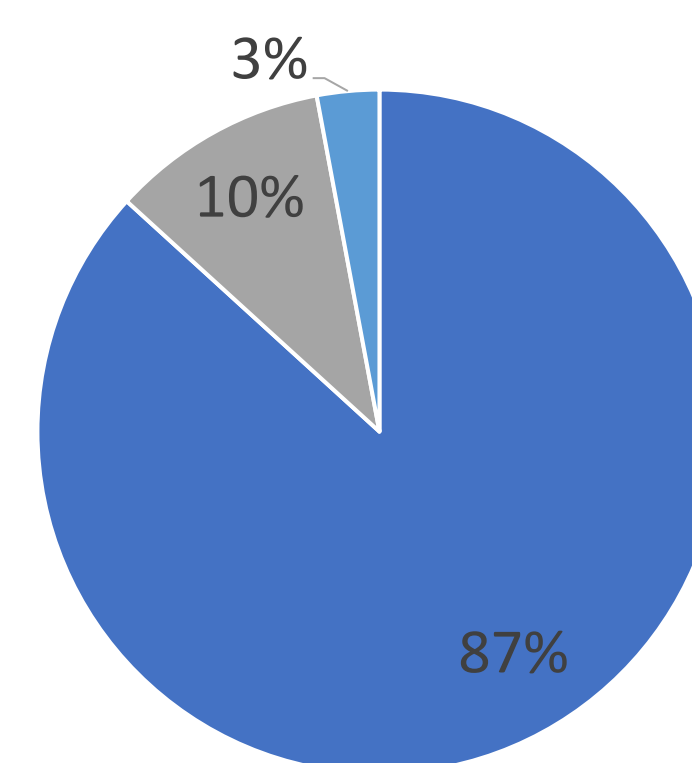
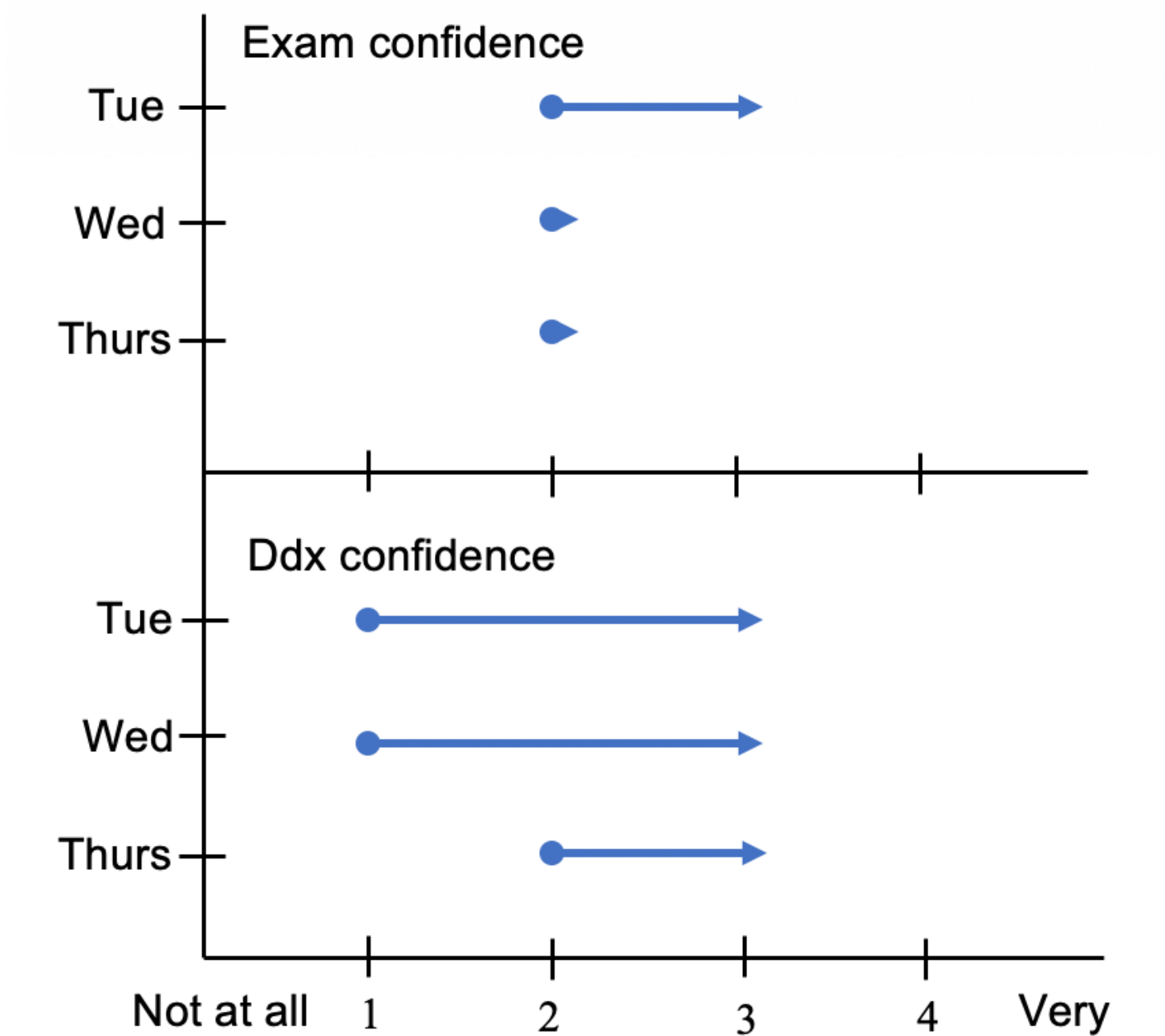
- No significant differences were noted in student confidence in the in-person vs virtual subgroup.
- Due to social distancing requirements, curricular time of in-person groups had to be decreased from previous years. Decrease in instruction time and differential diagnosis case practice may have impacted student confidence.
- Exam performance confidence varied by exam subtype.
- Several anonymous commentators suggested more coordination, if possible, between CS sessions and didactic learning.
- The results suggest an unmet demand for more dedicated practice time during the pre-clinical years of medical education.

## Results

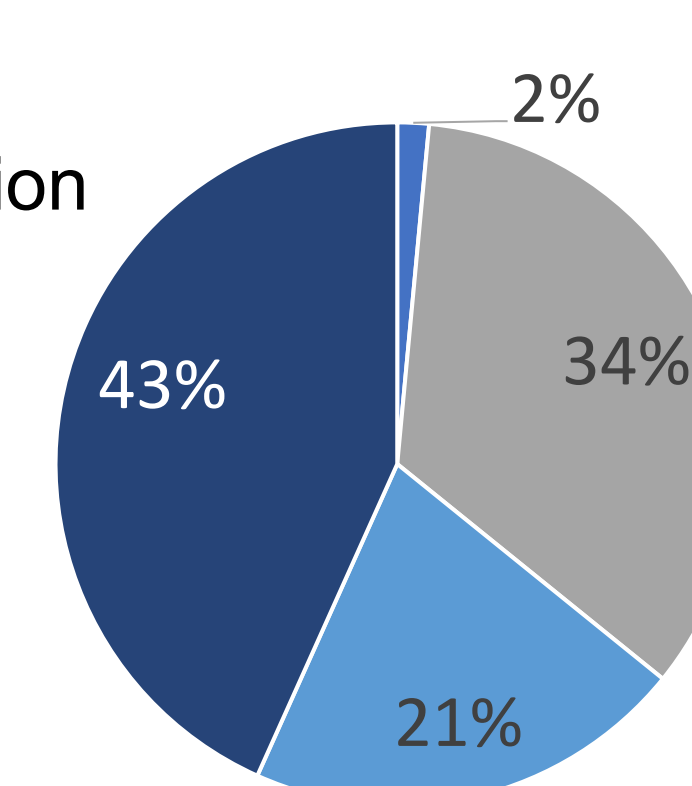
Median confidence ratings by CS group



Change in confidence ratings by CS group



Student location



Exam practice time

Endorsed item as barrier to learning CS	%
Not enough practice time during the course	63%
Not enough practice time outside of the course	71%
Not enough opportunities to practice on real patients	91%
Not enough practice on standardized patients	87%
Too many obligations in other courses to prioritize CS	75%

- N=68 (75% F, 25% M)
- Subgroups: 36% Tue, 32% Wed, 32% Thurs
- 88% of students reported practicing on peers was beneficial to learning
- 94% of students reported that practicing on standardized patients was in their top 5 most beneficial learning techniques