

Gender Health Meets Disability: An Intersectional Health Session for Medical Students

Kashia A. Rosenau PhD, Despina P. Goral EdM, Jessica Bernacki PhD, Emery H. Chang MD, Gifty-Maria J. Ntim MD MPH



Health



Background

A recent study found that 67% of surveyed medical students described LGBTQ+ curriculum at their institution as “fair” at best.¹ Additionally, while medical students agree it is also important to understand the clinical care of people with disabilities, the majority of medical students do not feel competent treating these populations.^{2,3,4} The present study evaluated an intersectional LGBTQ+ and disability health session presented to incoming first-year medical students.

Methods

Interdisciplinary faculty collaborated on a three-hour LGBTQ+ and disability health integrated session for medical students. Participants completed multiple activities, each with reflective discussions, including:

- Able-Bodied and Cisgender Privilege Checklist
- 15-minute video about disability healthcare
- Case study of an individual with an intellectual disability and their sexual and gender identity and potential sexual healthcare needs
- 15-minute video about professionalism in working with LGBTQ+ and gender diverse populations
- Case study of an LGBTQ+ patient with a physical disability

Medical students felt the topics were valuable, with one participant commenting, “I recommend that UCLA advocates for this kind of learning at other medical schools as well.”

Results

Medical student participants (N = 127) rated the mean session quality of the content/activities as a 5.4 on scale of 1-6 (1–low quality and 6–high quality; N=127). Participants provided substantially positive feedback about the session and reported appreciating the opportunity to examine their own biases and privileges. Participants also provided suggestions for improvement, such as more opportunities for participants to “share information and stories.”

Discussion

The present study highlights the need for medical education curriculum at the intersection of gender health and disability. While medical students provided predominantly positive feedback about the LGBTQ+ and disability health integrated session, they also expressed the need for increased content on gender and disability healthcare. Considering the limited space in medical school curriculum, intersectional facilitated sessions can be an efficient method for providing education on important topics such as gender health and disability.



This work was supported through NICHE-MED, an initiative of AADMD, funded by Elevance Health.



Learn more here.

¹White, William, et al. "Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender patient care: medical students' preparedness and comfort." *Teaching and learning in medicine* 27.3 (2015): 254-263.
²Chardavoine, Paige C., April M. Henry, and Karin Spruw Forté. "Understanding medical students' attitudes towards and experiences with persons with disabilities and disability education." *Disability and Health Journal* 15.2 (2022): 101267.
³Hotez, Emily, et al. "Medical Students' Perceptions, Knowledge, and Competence in Treating Neurodivergent, Disability, and Chronic Illness (NDCI) Populations: Results from a Cross-Sectional Study." *International Journal of Medical Students* 10.2 (2022): 148-157.
⁴Marzolf, Brianna A., et al. "Are medical students adequately trained to care for persons with disabilities?." *PRIMER: Peer-Reviewed Reports in Medical Education Research* 6 (2022).