



Interprofessional Education Experiences in Homeless Healthcare: Experiential Learning for Paramedic and Dietitian-Nutritionist Students

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Introduction

Interprofessional education (IPE) remains a cornerstone of clinical education for all healthcare professionals aiming for high quality patient care. However, IPE opportunities are mostly limited to didactics or one-on-one rotations.

Two School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences (SHRS) programs, Emergency Medicine (EM) and the Dietitian-Nutritionist Program (DNP), were selected as the preliminary departments to develop a formal clinical learning experience in homeless healthcare utilizing IPE.

Background on Street Medicine at Pitt (SMAP)

- Student-run organization with medical oversight founded in 2021
- SMAP is a nontraditional, unique, and enriching opportunity for experiential interprofessional service-learning that supports the homeless population of Pittsburgh.
- More than **24 health disciplines** are involved in SMAP including: pharmacy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, physician assistant, nursing, medical, and dentistry.

Objectives

Increase **diversity** and **sustainability** of IPE experiences by transforming extra-curricular street medicine volunteering into curriculum-based clinical opportunities.

Evaluate students' experience of IPE through SMAP to **promote interprofessional collaboration** and **student preparation for clinical environments**.

Student Quotes

"I was honestly surprised with how real the whole experience was. It's so easy for [people] to just walk past homeless individuals on the street, so getting to actually help and talk with them was such an eye-opening experience."

"I thought it was interesting to see the interactions between homeless [individuals] and healthcare professionals, as well as what their needs were."

"[SMAP] rounds surpassed my expectations. I was surprised by the connections already established within the homeless community and street medics."



Methods

- 12 EM students and 15 DNP students went on SMAP rounds during the 2023-2024 academic year.
- Students were asked to complete the Student Perceptions of Interprofessional Clinical Education-Revised (SPICE-R) survey both **before** and **after** their IPE experience.
- SPICE-R scores were compared and determined if a significant difference existed pre- and post- involvement in street medicine rotations.

Results

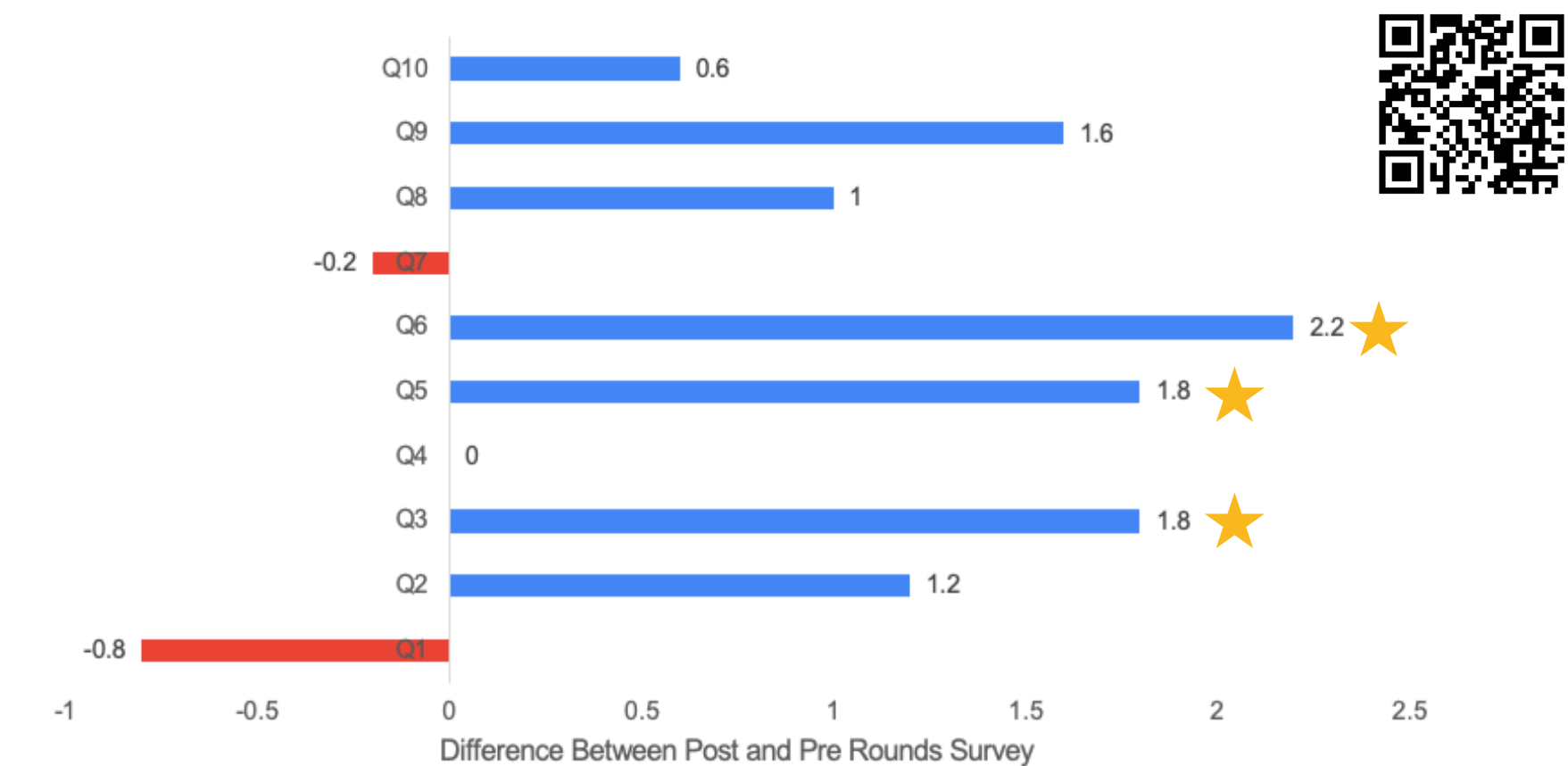


Figure 1. Difference of Weighted Averages for Survey Responses. Q1-Q10 represents the 10 questions from the SPICE-R survey. Positive values indicate more agreement with the statements post-rounds, while negative values indicate less agreement post-rounds.

- After attending rounds, students agreed **significantly more** with the questions starred on the graph:
 - Q3: *Patient/client satisfaction is improved when care is delivered by an interprofessional team.*
 - Q5: *I understand the courses taken by, and training requirements of, other health professionals*
 - Q6: *Healthcare costs are reduced when patients/clients are treated by an interprofessional team after rounds,*

Summary of Findings

- Participants believed that working with students from different health disciplines **positively supplements** their education, **enhances** their ability to work with an interprofessional team, and **increases their knowledge** on the role of other members on the team.
- After attending rounds, **81%** of participants agreed that SMAP was an **effective community-health clinical opportunity** for students within their respective program.