

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

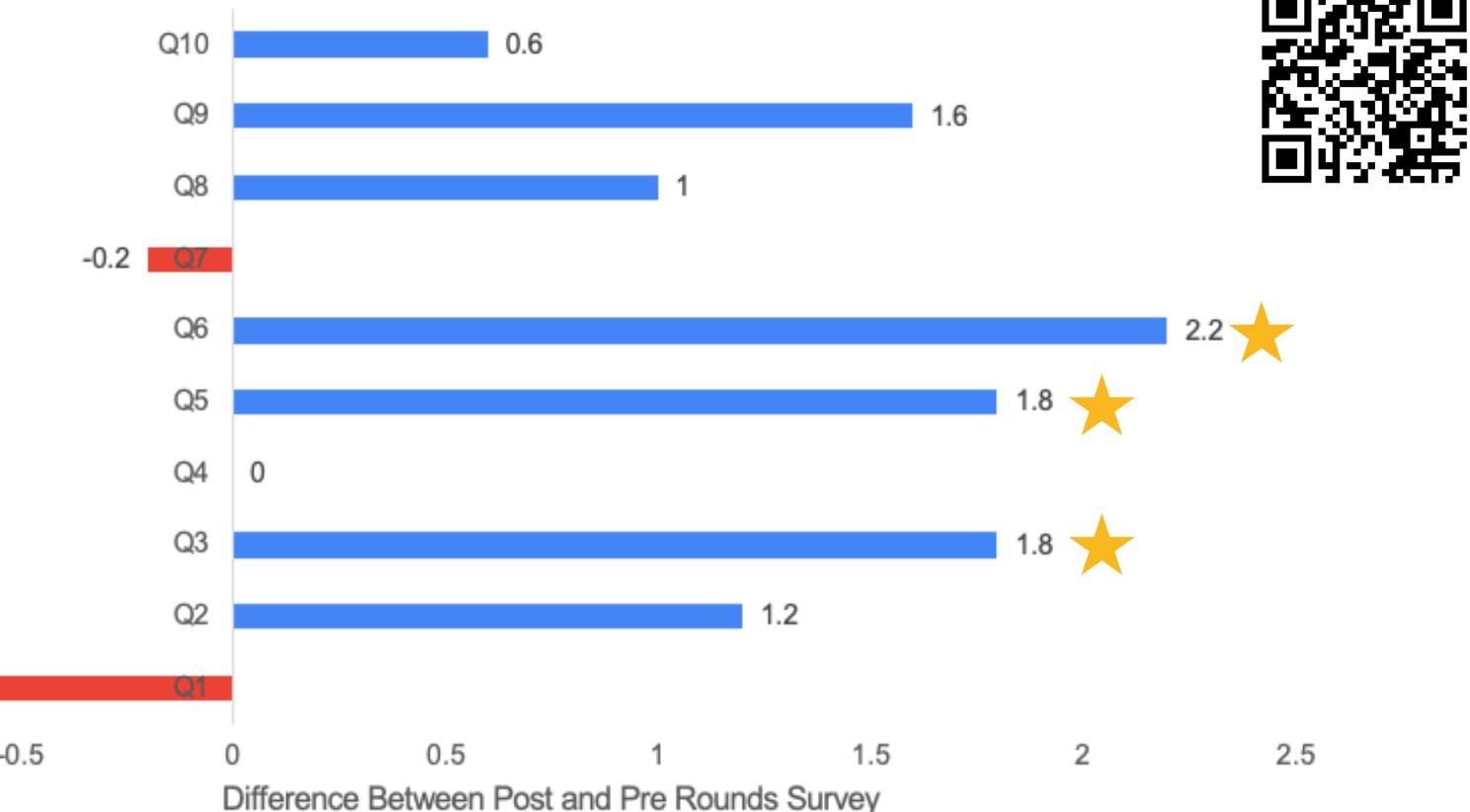


Figure 1. Difference of Weighted Averages for Survey Responses. Q1-Q10 represents the 10 questions from the SPICE-R survey. Positive values indicate more agreement with the statements post-rounds, while negative values indicate less agreement post-rounds.

- 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.