

The impact of interprofessional education on medical students’ knowledge and attitudes toward older adult.

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INTRODUCTION

Institute of Medicine had already stated the impact of aging population on health care, and Residency Review Committee of the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education also addressed the importance of Gerontology & Geriatrics training. Taiwan association of gerontology and geriatrics keeps encouraging medical centers to set up gerontology and geriatrics training programs in these years, and National Cheng Kung University Hospital is one of several training programs in Taiwan. The impact of such an interprofessional education (IPE) on medical students’ knowledge and attitudes was unknown. We conducted a prospective cohort study to evaluate medical students’ knowledge and attitudes toward older adults before and after the training programs.

METHODS

Participants

The participants were medical students who rotated to the Geriatrics ward during January 1st, 2012 to December 31st, 2014. They received a 2-week IPE, including medical round, interprofessional conference, special lecture and journal reading, etc. All of them were given the pretests and the posttests of geriatrics knowledge (Palmore’s Facts on Aging Quiz, FAQ) and geriatrics attitudes (University of California at Los Angeles Geriatrics Attitudes Scale Geriatrics Attitude Scale, UCLAGAS) questionnaires on the first day and the last day during their rotation, respectively. The study was approved by Institute Review Board of National Cheng Kung University Hospital.

Palmore’s Facts on Aging Quiz

This questionnaire was developed by Palmore in 1977, and its reliability and validity were done by Liu in 2003. This brief quiz, composed of 25 true or false tests with a mixture of positively and negatively worded questions, covers key elements of physical, mental, and social domains of aging. It was originally applied for undergraduate sociology and human development students, and it is now commonly used as a geriatric teaching tool in medical education.

University of California at Los Angeles Geriatrics Attitude Scale

The University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) Geriatrics Attitudes Scale has been validated for measuring attitudes toward the elderly of primary care residents in the United States. It is a 14-item questionnaire with a mixture of positively and negatively worded statements. Responses are graded on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1-point) to strongly agree (5-point), a rating of 3-point indicating a neutral response. The Chinese version was developed by Lee.

COI Disclosure
I have no financial relationships to disclose

RESULTS

There were 51 participants recruited in the study (Table 1). The average scores of FAQ were 52.00±12.19 and 53.80±11.87 for the pretests and posttests (p=0.207), respectively; the average scores of GAS were 3.37±0.39 and 3.50±0.42 for the pretests and posttests (p=0.003), respectively. Both the average scores of FAQ and GAS improved in the posttests, although there was only statistical significance in the pretests and posttests of GAS. Figure 1 and figure 2 demonstrate the comparison between pre-tests and post-tests of FAQ and GAS, respectively.

Table 1. Demographic data of 51 participants

Variables	Pre-tests	Post-tests	p value
Facts on Aging Quiz	52.00±12.19	53.80±11.87	0.207
Geriatrics Attitude Scale	3.37±0.39	3.50±0.42	0.003

DISCUSSION

This study demonstrates that geriatrics knowledge and attitude could be improved after IPE focused on comprehensive geriatric assessment and geriatric syndromes. FAQ and GAS scores increased in the post-tests, as compared with those in the pre-tests.

FAQ and GAS scores in our study were comparable to those in the previous reports, and it is clear that negative images of aging are present at both medical students and residents. Current medical education in our college lacks the topic of geriatric medicine, and it is time to set up such a curriculum. We hope that our study could be a guide to the geriatric education in Department of Medicine, and that well education would bring better geriatric care in the future.

Conclusions

This study demonstrates that medical students’ geriatrics knowledge and attitudes could be improved after IPE. Further studies are needed to establish more rigorous results.

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Figure 1. Comparison between pre-tests and post-tests of Facts on Aging Quiz (FAQ)

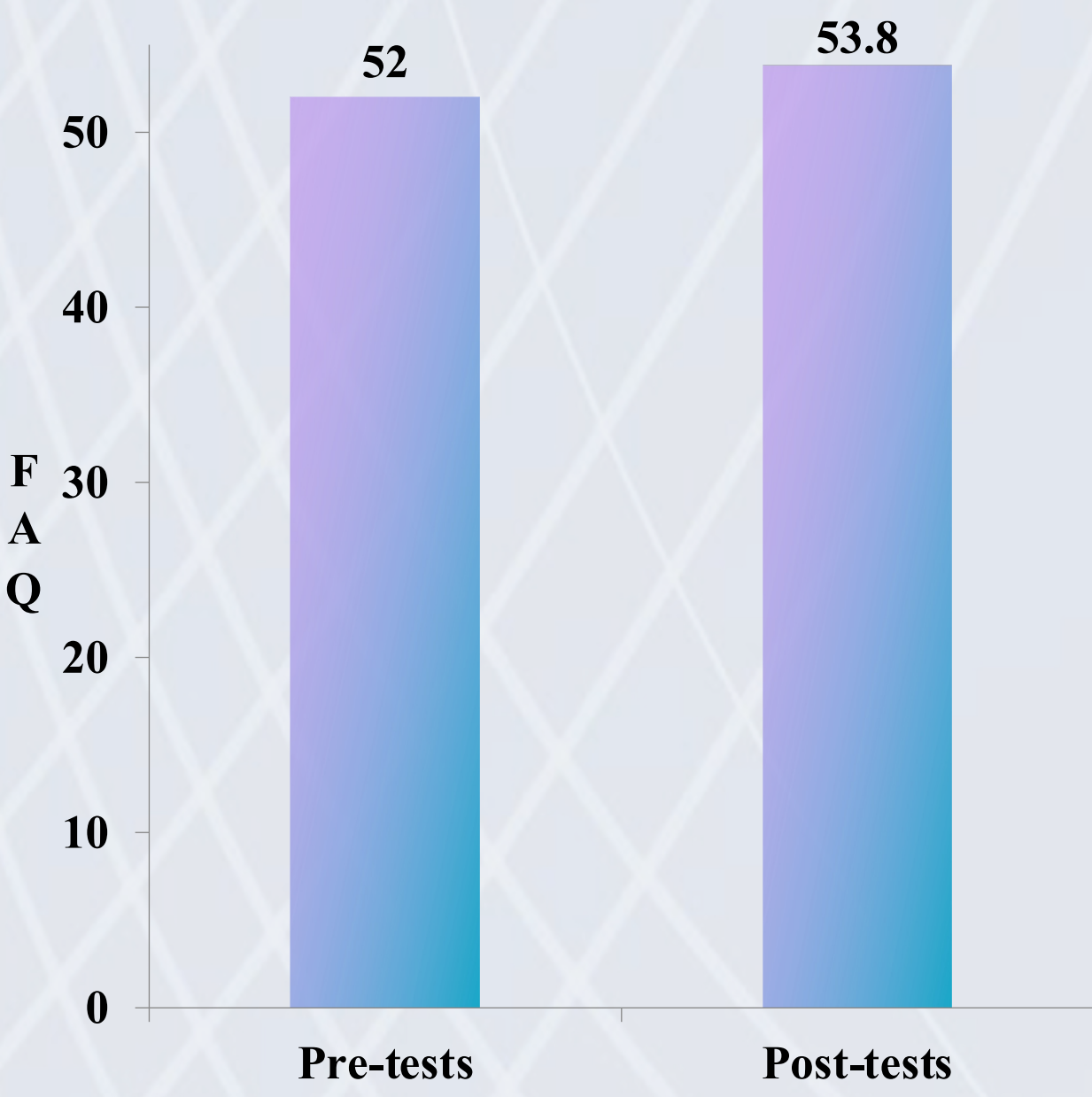


Figure 2. Comparison between pre-tests and post-tests of Geriatrics Attitude Scale (GAS)

