Measuring the Impact of a Dementia Simulation with Health Care Administration Students

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Introduction

- Dementia, an impaired ability with no treatment available as a cure, has been recognized as a priority for public health.
- The amount of time that caregivers spend caretaking may result in detrimental effects on their psychosocial and physical health.
- This project focuses on identifying the effects on conducting a dementia simulation in student training.

Rationale

- Previous studies related to dementia simulations and students in other disciplines (e.g., nursing) showed promising results of increased empathy and learning outcomes.
- There is a lack of research on the effects of dementia simulation training on undergraduate long-term health care administration students.
- Results will determine the importance of implementing a hands-on learning experience in the training of health care administration students.

Demographics

Characteristics	N	%
Gender		
Female	25	74
Male	9	26
Age		
21	18	53
22	13	38
23	2	6
26	1	3

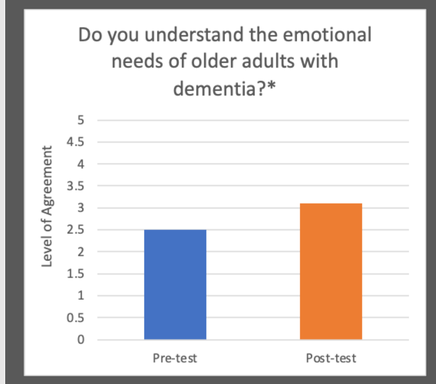
Characteristics	N	%
Race		
White	30	88
Asian	3	9
Two or more	1	3
Hispanic		
Yes	1	3
No	32	97

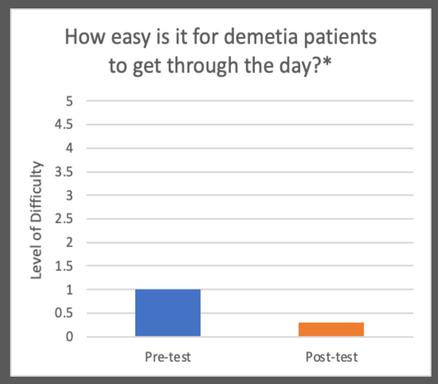
Methodology

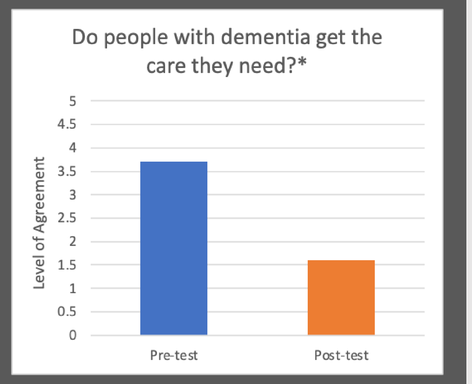
- 34 health care administration students in their final (internship) year of the program were led to a Prep Room where they received simulation instructions from the primary faculty researcher, donned simulation gear, and completed a pre-simulation survey.
- Students were led into a classroom (the Experience Room) in groups of 3-4.
- Students completed the 8-10 minute Dementia Live® simulation, led by the primary faculty researcher (a Dementia Live® Coach).
- After completion, the primary faculty researcher led students back to the PREP room where students removed gear and completed a post-simulation survey.
- Responses from pre- and post- simulation surveys were collected and compiled into a single data set by the student research assistant (SRA).
- One faculty member ran quantitative analyses on the numerical data.
- The SRA and faculty researchers conducted a qualitative thematic analysis to determine categories and themes of responses.

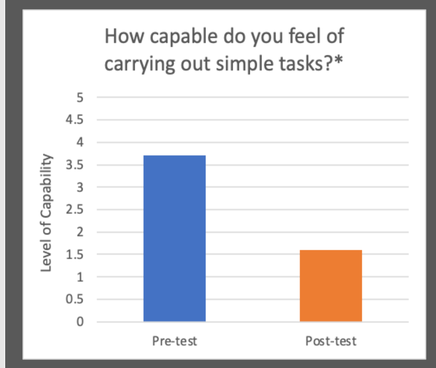
Results

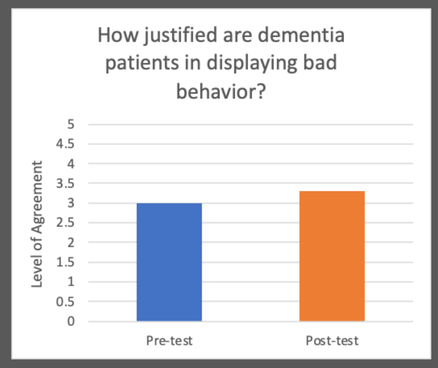
Quantitative Results

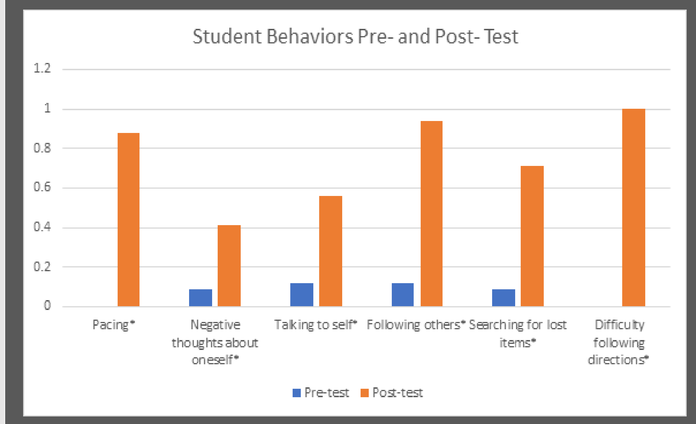


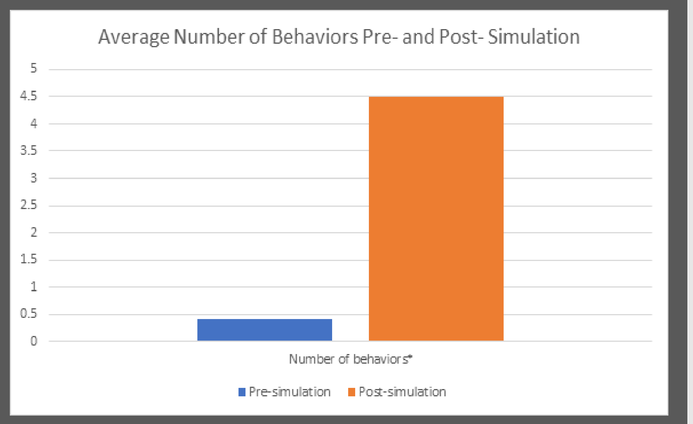












*significant at the $p = .05$ level

Qualitative Results

How they talk

- Slow speech
- Calm speech
- Tone of voice
- Clear articulation
- Repetition

How they act

- Slow approach
- More patients
- Touch awareness
- Don't overload
- Visual cues
- Extra help
- Redirection

What they say

- Simple words
- Clear directions
- Announce yourself

Simulation advocacy

- Share with others

Participants were asked to reflect on changes they might make to their behavior post-simulation.

"I look at residents with a whole different perspective now. I will stay calm and continue to be patient when dealing with this population"

"I will be more patient and direct, using visual cues as much as possible with dementia residents"

"Announce yourself when talking to someone; watch tone of voice carefully when touching someone- it is startling"

"Explaining things carefully, and slowly. More empathetical/understanding. Explaining/teaching others what it is like"

Discussion

- After completing the Dementia Live® simulation, administrative residency students reported changes in their perception of residents with dementia in the following ways:
  - An increase in understanding of emotional needs
  - A confirmation related to difficulty in every day life
  - Reinforced their feeling that residents with dementia need more care than they are receiving
  - A decrease in feelings of capability in carrying out simple tasks
- After completing the Dementia Live® simulation, administrative residency students reported a higher number of behaviors as compared to pre-simulation.

Limitations and Future Research

- This study was limited to participants from one undergraduate institution; future research might consider expanding on a wider scale.
- The sample size was limited. Researchers will conduct another Dementia Live® simulation in the fall of 2023 with 34 additional students.
- The sample lacked diversity, particularly in ethnicity and age. These students are also younger than practitioners; future research might explore whether generational differences impact results.
- Future research may consider conducting a similar study on the population at large (not limited to those in health care) in comparison with practitioners.

Conclusion

- This study demonstrated that long-term health care administration students exhibited increased levels of empathy and understanding towards older adults with dementia after completion of a Dementia Live® simulation experience.
- The UW-Eau Claire Health Care Administration program will continue to conduct this simulation annually with health care administration students.

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