

Transgender Healthcare Teaching in the Undergraduate Medical School Curriculum

School of Medicine, Dentistry & Nursing

A. Donaldson¹, J. Ewan², R. Frize¹, S.F. Sneddon¹.

1. Undergraduate Medical School, University of Glasgow; 2. Sandyford Gender Clinic, NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde

With increasing recognition of the diverse and specific needs of transgender individuals in a health care setting, lack of knowledge, poor attitudes and prejudice towards transgender patients can result in this population being afraid to access medical care. Educating medical students early in their career in a sensitive and inclusive manner could help change these attitudes. It has been shown that medical undergraduates and post-graduates often feel unprepared or uncomfortable in caring for transgender patients due to lack of training and experience²⁻⁴. The aim of this study was to address this through introduction of basic transgender healthcare education into the University of Glasgow undergraduate medical curriculum, with the goal of implementing further interactive and fully inclusive teaching.



Figure 1: Transgender Symbol¹

Aims

- To give basic medical knowledge of transgender health care to early stage medical students.
- To discern the understanding, knowledge and comfort using knowledge of early stage medical students in relation to transgender health care issues.

Methods

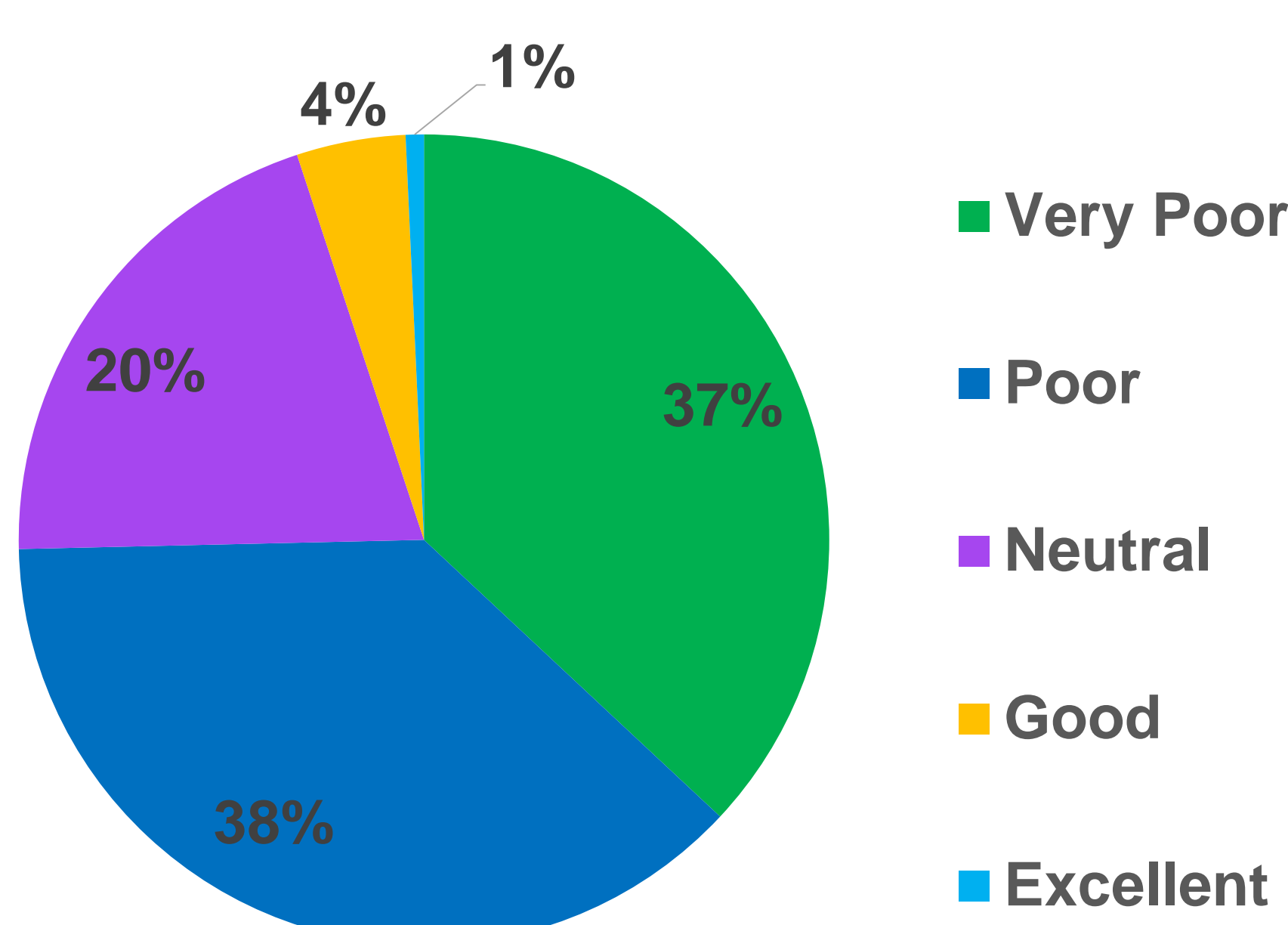
- Literature review of current research into transgender health care education was undertaken. 83 papers were found, with only 14 being eligible for full reading.
- An hour long lecture was prepared and delivered to Year 2 undergraduate medical students by a Gender Specialist containing terminology associated with gender dysphoria, the health pathway of a transitioning patient and medical and surgical options for transitioning patients.
- An anonymous 18 question survey using a Likert scale and a comment section was produced for the students to answer before and after lecture to discern:
 - Understanding of and comfort using gender terminology
 - Understanding of and comfort using medical and surgical management of transgender patients
 - Opinions of introduction of transgender healthcare into medical curriculum
 - Opinions of further education techniques that could be included into curriculum

Results

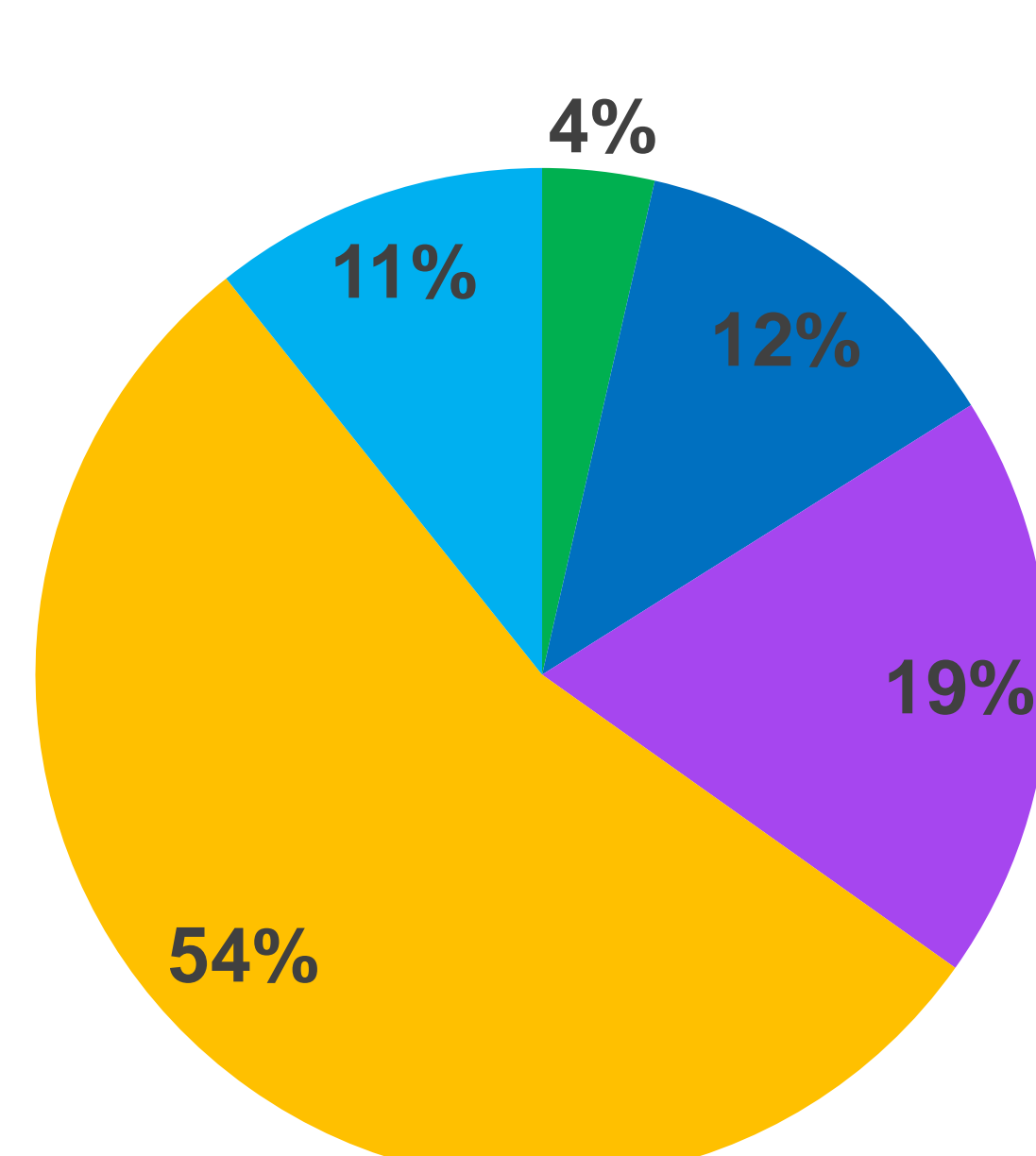
- Questionnaires were distributed to 241 Year 2 undergraduate medical students prior to and after delivery of the transgender healthcare lecture.
- 138 students completed the pre-lecture questionnaire (57%)
- 112 students completed the post-lecture questionnaire (46%)

Q. What is your understanding of specific health needs for transgender people out with the transition process?

Pre-Lecture

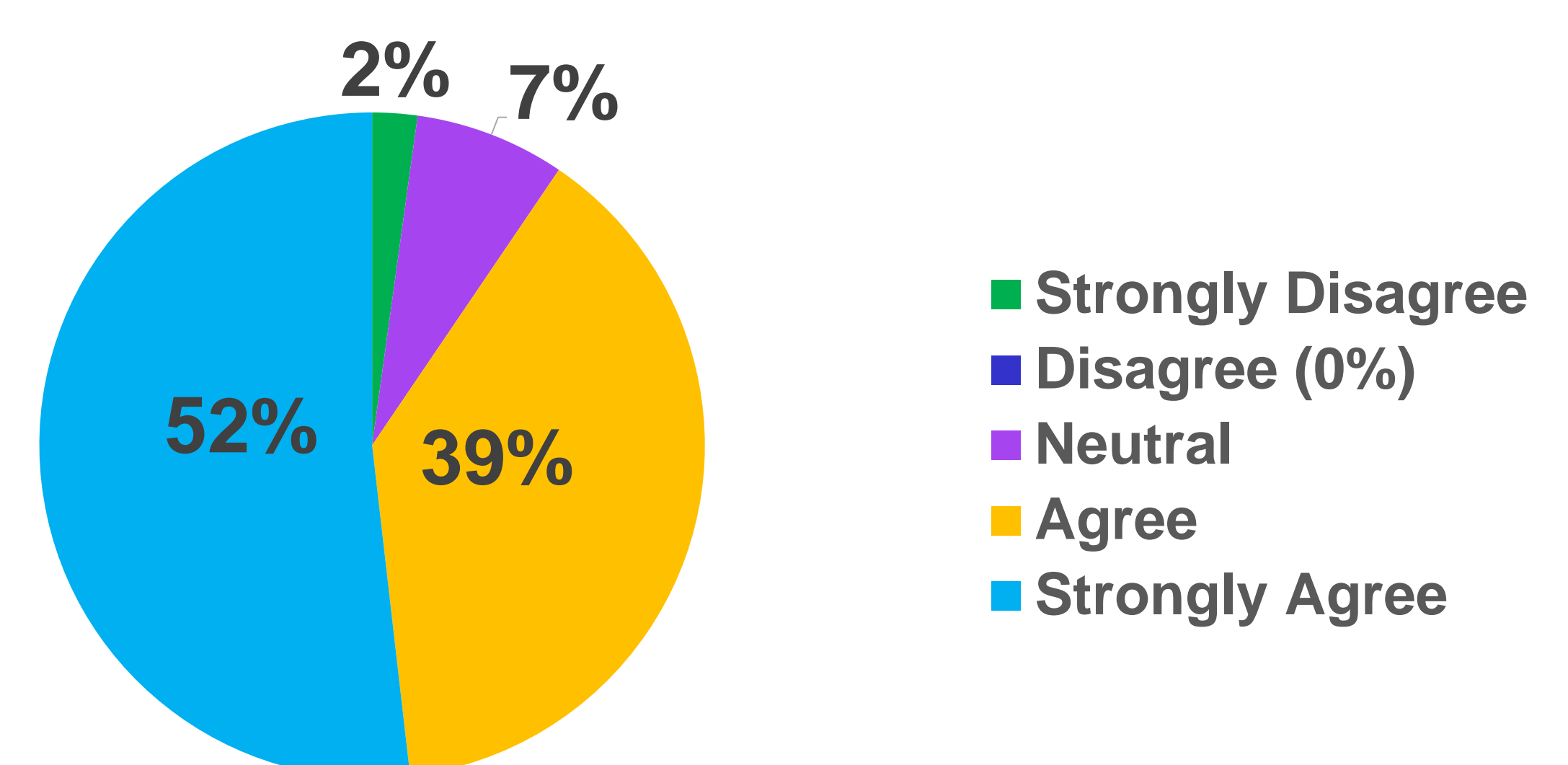


Post-Lecture



- Before the lecture, students had:
 - Poor understanding of gender terminology e.g. binary, non-binary
 - Poor understanding of management (medical, surgical, psychological)
 - Felt uncomfortable using terms: transgender, binary and non-binary
- After the lecture, statistically significant ($p=0.000$) improvements were shown in:
 - Understanding of terminology and management
 - Comfort using knowledge of terminology and management

Q. The Medical Curriculum should include Teaching on Transgender Health Care.



- Student comments included wanting more teaching on transgender patient mental health problems and more interactive sessions
- Students favoured the following teaching sessions:
 - Patient consultations (66.9%)
 - PBL scenarios (57.1%)
 - Communication skills (50.9%)
 - Lectures (32.1%)
 - Small group sessions (14.3%)

Conclusions

- This study has shown that the vast majority of medical undergraduates would value teaching on transgender health care included in their curriculum.
- A one hour lecture improved student knowledge and comfort around transgender healthcare, improving their confidence before practical placements start.
- Although the lecture was beneficial, students would like more interactive teaching involving members of the transgender community to further improve their knowledge and confidence.
- We wish to repeat this questionnaire after introduction of further teaching such as communication skills sessions.

References

- Timeline of UK Transgender History - LGBT Archive. http://lgbthistoryuk.org/wiki/Timeline_of_UK_Transgender_History
- Rondahl G. Students inadequate knowledge about lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons. *Int J Nurs Educ Scholarsh*. 2009 Jan 1;6(1):Article11.
- Parameshwaran V, Cockbain BC, Hillyard M, Price JR. Is the Lack of Specific Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer/Questioning (LGBTQ) Health Care Education in Medical School a Cause for Concern? Evidence From a Survey of Knowledge and Practice Among UK Medical Students. *J Homosex* 2017; 64(3) 367-381.
- Freeman S, Sousa S, Neufeld E. Sexuality in later life: examining beliefs and perceptions of undergraduate students. *Gerontol Geriatr Educ*. 2014;35(2):200-13.