

## Addressing Racial Health Disparities in Medicine: A quality improvement project to improve healthcare students' knowledge on racism in Medicine

Matthew Nguyen  
*Lehigh Valley Health Network, [matthew.nguyen@lvhn.org](mailto:matthew.nguyen@lvhn.org)*

Jessica Huang  
*Lehigh Valley Health Network*

Shirley Smith  
*Lehigh Valley Health Network*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarlyworks.lvhn.org/select-program>



Part of the [Medical Education Commons](#)

## Let us know how access to this document benefits you

---

### Published In/Presented At

Nguyen, M., Huang, J., & Smith, S. (2022). *Addressing racial health disparities in medicine: A quality improvement project to improve healthcare students' knowledge on racism in medicine*. Poster presented at Lehigh Valley Health Network, Allentown, PA.

This Poster is brought to you for free and open access by LVHN Scholarly Works. It has been accepted for inclusion in LVHN Scholarly Works by an authorized administrator. For more information, please contact [LibraryServices@lvhn.org](mailto:LibraryServices@lvhn.org).



# Addressing Racial Health Disparities in Medicine: A quality improvement project to improve healthcare students' knowledge on racism in Medicine

Matthew Nguyen MS4, Jessica Huang MD, Shirley Smith BA

Lehigh Valley Health Network, Allentown, Pennsylvania

## Background

Our country has long suffered through structural and individual racism. Recent events in America have further divided us and illustrate the need to bridge the gap between people of color and white America. One area to target is medical education. There are few resources or lectures on racism in medical education including both medical school and residency. This project hopes to shed some light on the history of racism in medicine as well as the current practices. In doing so, we want to spark a discussion on how to address the issue of race in medicine, and help students learn how to engage in problem solving when it comes to matters of race.

## Problem Statement

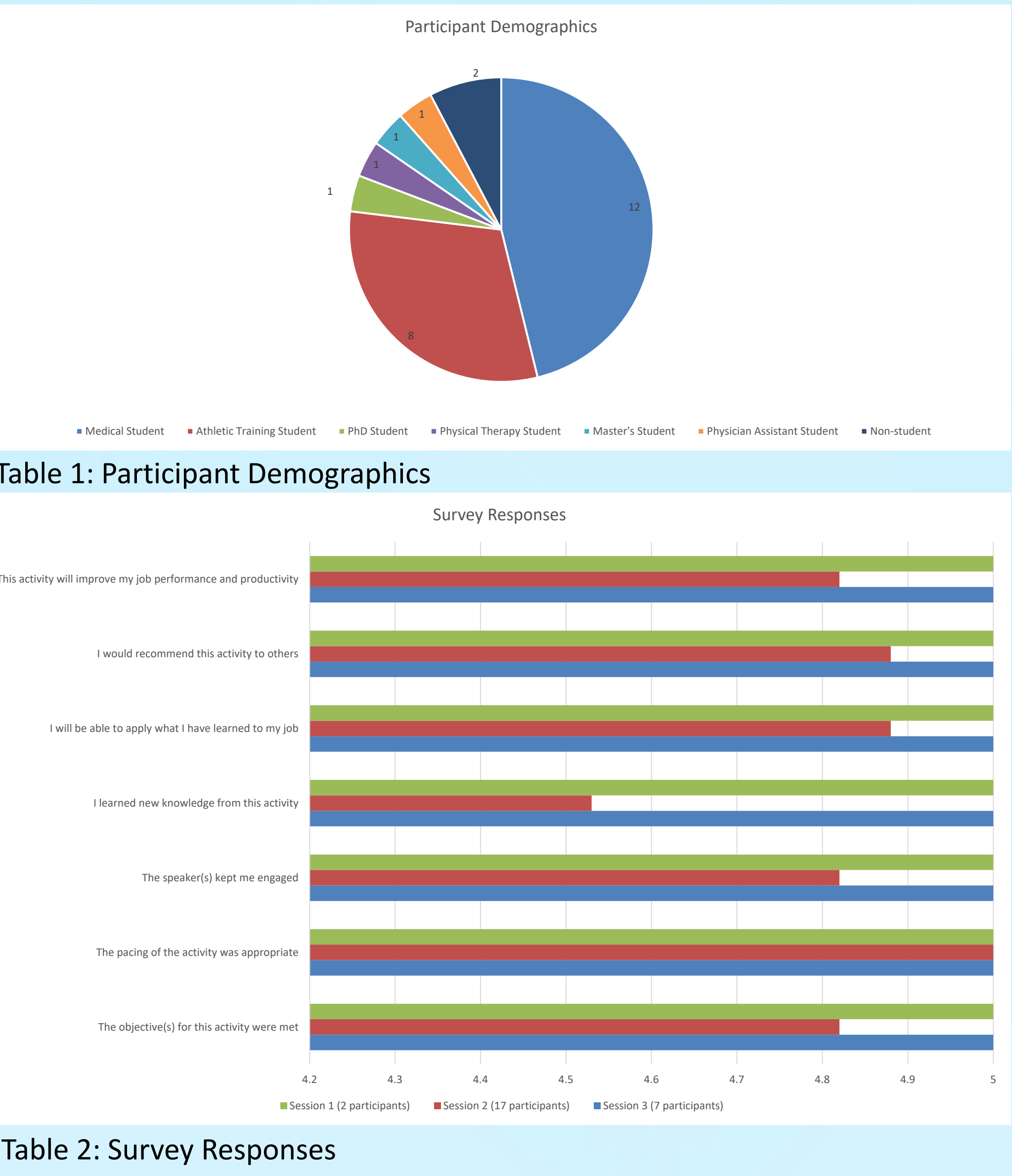
Our project aims to address and discuss racial bias in medicine by providing presentations that spark discussion to students and residents measuring listeners attitudes about how much they learned, the applicability of the material, and inquire about what aspects of the content was relevant or interesting to them.

## Methods

- This project was started by a previous medical student, Dr. Jessica Huang
- The project was inspired by call for more education on racism in medicine
- The three presentations were adapted from the previous, with notable change in focus to public health and added emphasis on applicable strategies and techniques
- More content was utilized in the form of validated research articles and published works
- The Student Council on Diversity and Inclusion hosted and advertised for the events
- Students recruited from multiple programs such as Physician Assistant and Athletic Training
- Surveys were filled out by participants to assess value of lectures

## Results

- Highly diverse group of participants (Table 1)
- Positive comments
  - “It went great! I wish this was part of our curriculum”
  - Matthew presented plenty of studies and gave places to find even more
- Takeaways
  - “training on hard discussions regarding race and mistakes that could be made during conversations”
  - “The actionable nuggets of what to do in some moments.”
- Improvements for presentations
  - “Applying other schools not just medical school examples”
  - “Add some scenarios where the doctor is displaying microaggressions and some where the patient is, and then how to react to those”
- Barriers to change
  - “Refusal to admit that someone who does not consider oneself as racist or and of the -ist making comments and refusing correction
  - “Being drained”
- Survey Responses in Table 2 below



## Discussion

- Medical Education needs to include curricular elements regarding racism in medicine
- Students in healthcare desire actionable and realistic strategies for dealing with racially charged interactions in their daily lives
- Presentations on racism in medicine that provide history and context are useful to students
- Presentations that also discuss microaggressions and racism public health can also help develop the conversation
- Students also want examples from all health professions
- They also recommend scenario-based learning exercises in the future
- Barriers include tiring work life, time constraints, and pre-established notions of race
- Hope to increase participants - 24 total participants over 3 presentations

## Conclusions

- We believe that these presentations have shown to provide useful information on the topic of racism in medicine
- These issues are very relevant to all aspects of SELECT, in particular, Values-Based Patient Centered Care
- Discussing and understanding the values of patients of color are essential in bridging the racial divide
- It is important to increase awareness, provide historical and current context, and develop strategies to combat racism in healthcare on multiple levels
- More efforts to include discussions on racism are necessary for medicine to progress
- Outside of presentations, we can practice role-playing scenarios, build up public health programs, and change the culture of our profession and country

© 2018 Lehigh Valley Health Network