**THE IMPACT OF MEDICAL INSTRUCTORS’ ATTITUDES TOWARDS PATIENTS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES ON MEDICAL STUDENTS**

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**Objectives:** The attitudes held by medical professionals are an important determining factor in patients with developmental disabilities’ (DD) ability to access health care services. Negative attitudes possessed by health care providers can lead to poorer health outcomes for patients with DD compared to the rest of the population, such as higher mortality rates. Although there is a recognized need for disability-informed health care, many providers frequently report feelings of discomfort when working with individuals with DD. Many health care students also report that they did not receive enough formal training on disabilities during their education. However, to date, few researchers have examined the *impact* of instructors’ biases and beliefs on undergraduate medical students’ attitudes towards this population; yet, researchers have previously indicated that a preceptor’s knowledge, attitudes, and skills can impact those of their students regarding DD.

**Methods:** This poster is from a major paper research project. This study aims to answer the following primary research question: *What impact do instructors and preceptors have on medical students’ attitudes towards patients with developmental disabilities?* Using Social Power Theory (French & Raven, 1965) as a guiding theoretical framework the current study explored themes in the literature regarding the impact of instructors’ attitudes on medical learners’ attitudes towards individuals with DD. Examples of key words used for the literature search included “medical students”, “attitudes”, “social power”, “medical education”, and “physicians”.

**Results:** In total, 49 articles were reviewed and included for this analysis. The articles selected were published primarily between the years of 1980 and 2019, given the deinstitutionalization movement and the significant shift in attitudes towards people with disabilities occurring during this period.Three main themes were identified in the literature: (1) Barriers to accessing health care, including both providers’ and students’ knowledge and attitudes; (2) Gaps in the health care curricula and formal education; and (3) the power dynamic and culture of medical education.

**Discussion:** As a result of social power, health care students’ knowledge and attitudes toward patients with DD may be influenced by those held by their instructors. The results of this literature review suggest that there is a lack of formal education and clinical opportunities for medical students to learn about DD. Patients with DD have articulated a desire to be involved in medical education in a professional capacity; this position of power may provide them with an opportunity to improve students’ knowledge while eliminating potential biases. Although medical educators are experts in the field of health care, they are often not formally trained as educators. The implications of this lack of formal training are that much of preceptors’ teaching styles are left to their discretion, which may include negative teaching approaches such as “ritual humiliation”.

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