



# PSYCHOSOCIAL PERSPECTIVE ON MEDICAL STUDENTS' CONFIDENCE IN TREATING PATIENTS WITH DISABILITIES

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## INTRODUCTION

Quality care for individuals with disabilities is a fundamental requirement in healthcare, demanding not only medical proficiency but also a profound understanding of the psychosocial aspects associated with disability.<sup>1</sup>

However, healthcare providers often lack confidence in treating patients with disabilities due to inadequate exposure and training. Psychosocial dimensions of disability, such as communication, empathy, and understanding patients' unique experiences, are crucial for delivering effective care.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, there is a compelling need to develop medical curricula that emphasize these facets.

This study seeks to evaluate the influence of a curriculum centered on disabilities on the confidence levels of second-year medical students as they progress to their third-year clinical rotations.

## METHODS

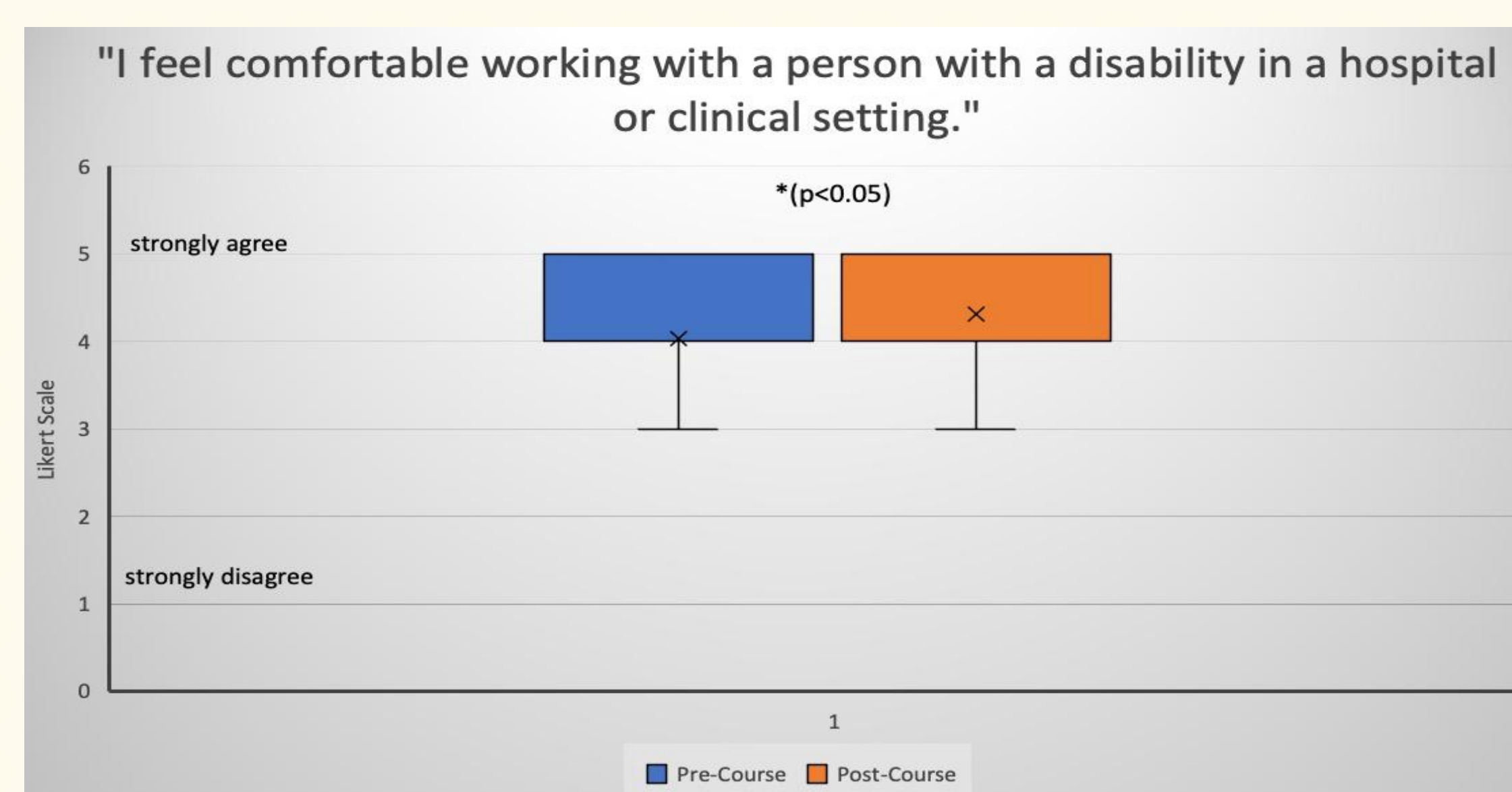
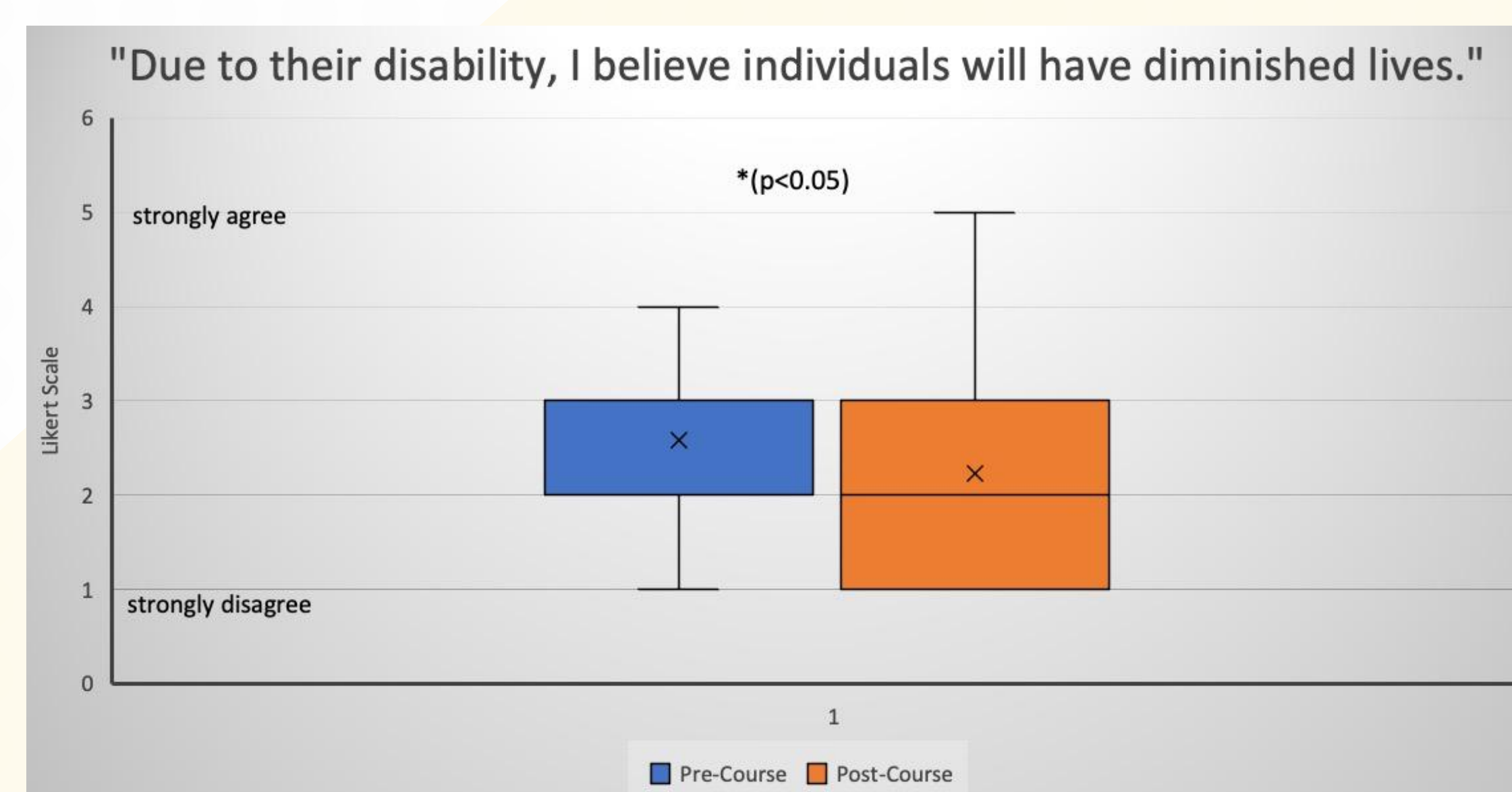
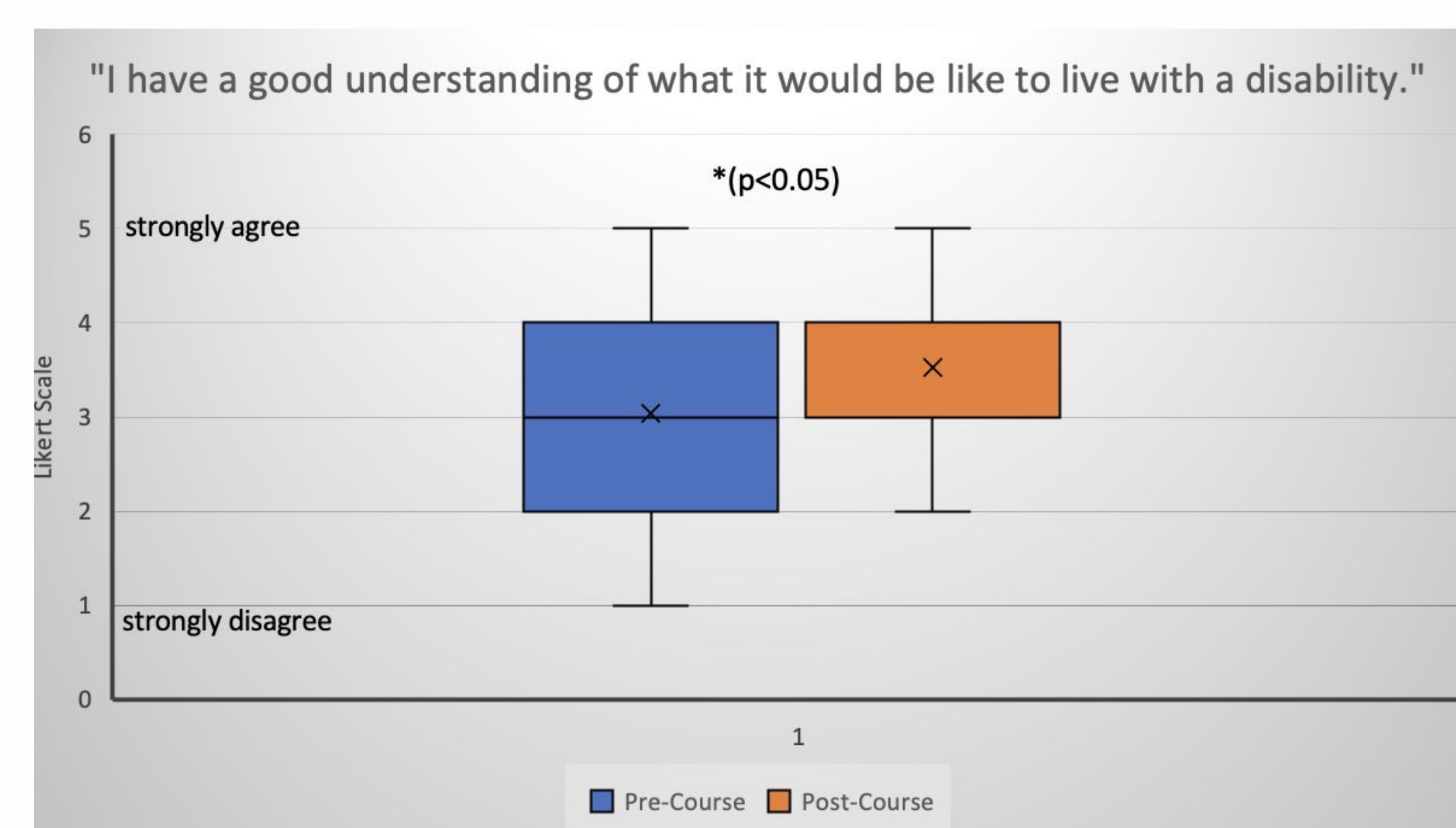
The Population, Patient, Physician, and Professionalism (P4) course is designed for first and second-year medical students to develop a holistic understanding of the biopsychosocial aspects of medical practice.

Within this course, second-year medical students participated in a dedicated disability module, in which they completed both pre-surveys and post-surveys. These surveys were utilized to gauge changes in their perspectives, self-confidence, and knowledge pertaining to individuals with disabilities.

The surveys encompassed a series of questions using a 5-point Likert-scale that assessed their attitudes concerning disabilities within society, as well as their perceived proficiency in the care of patients with disabilities.

Statistical analysis was conducted using unpaired t-tests to determine statistical significance between pre- and post-surveys.

## RESULTS



The results of our study show that students had improved understanding of the reality of life with a disability. Additionally, students' perspectives of negative impact of disability on quality of life improved. Students also reported feeling more comfortable working with person with a disability in a hospital or clinical setting.

## CONCLUSION

This study shed light on the importance of disability-focused curriculum in medical education. The findings reveal several key insights regarding the impact of such a curriculum on medical students' perspectives, self-confidence, and knowledge related to individuals with disabilities.

Quantitative analysis of the survey data identified statistically significant shifts in students' perceptions and self-confidence regarding disability care. These changes indicate that the disability-focused curriculum has a measurable impact on students' readiness to interact with and provide care for patients with disabilities.

This research has the potential to revolutionize medical education by emphasizing the psychosocial dimensions of disability care. Improved confidence in treating patients with disabilities can lead to more compassionate and effective healthcare, addressing a critical gap in healthcare delivery.

## REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup>Ratakonda S, Argersinger DP, Auchus GC, McGowan C, Ship H, Wang DR, McKee MM. A call for disability health curricula in medical schools. *Trends Mol Med.* 2022 Dec;28(12):1012-1015. doi: 10.1016/j.molmed.2022.08.004. Epub 2022 Sep 12. PMID: 36109318.

<sup>2</sup>Crane JM, Strickler JG, Lash AT, Macerollo A, Prokup JA, Rich KA, Robinson AC, Whalen Smith CN, Havercamp SM. Getting comfortable with disability: The short- and long-term effects of a clinical encounter. *Disabil Health J.* 2021 Apr;14(2):100993. doi: 10.1016/j.dhjo.2020.100993. Epub 2020 Sep 11. PMID: 33012692.

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