



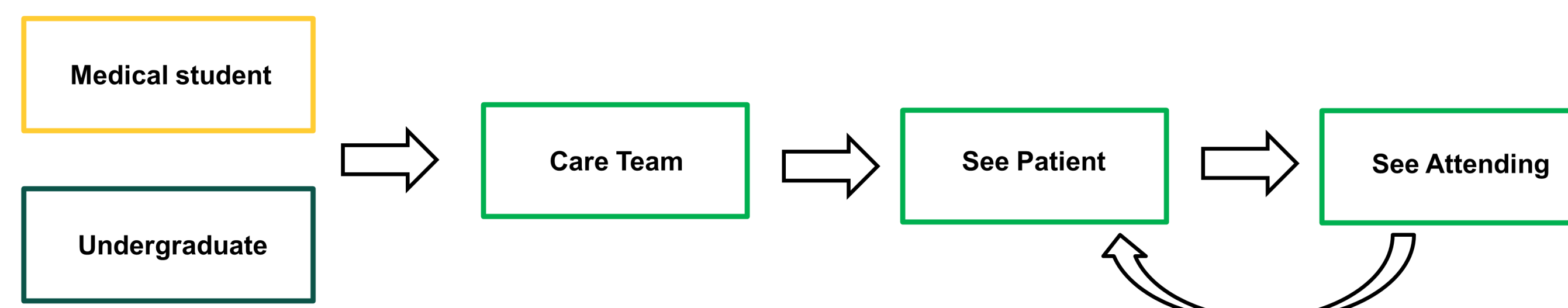
The Effectiveness of a Student-Run Free Clinic as a Learning Tool for Undergraduates

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Introduction

Cass Clinic is a student-run health clinic that provides free healthcare for the underserved population in Detroit. Care teams at Cass consist of Wayne State University medical students who evaluate the patient and undergraduate students who observe the encounter.

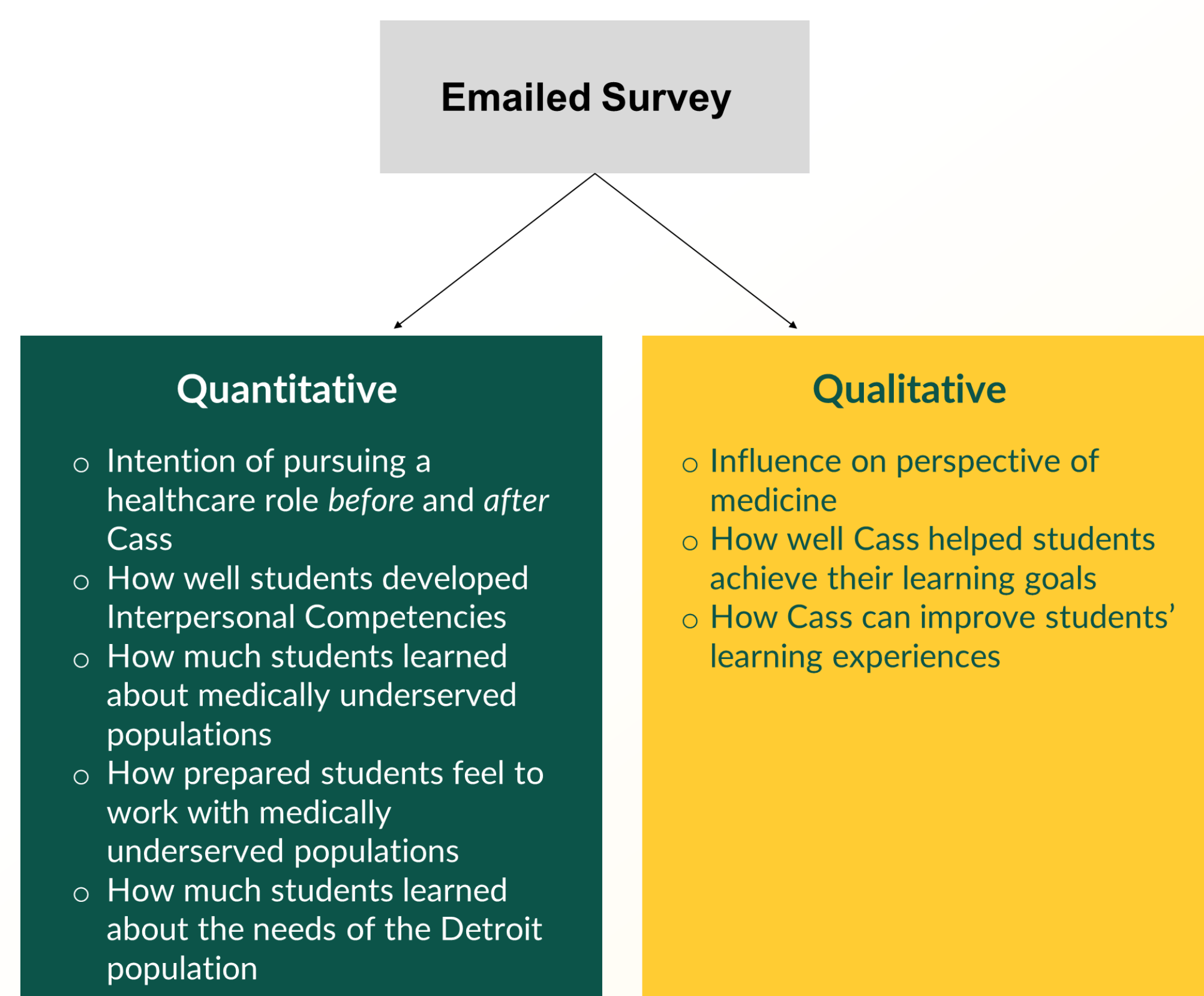


The undergraduate students on the Cass care team are typically on a pre-health track and attend Cass for hands-on experience with medicine. We believe that Cass and other student-run free clinics can play an important role in the education of pre-health students, in influencing their perspectives of medicine, and in enhancing their preparation for future healthcare roles. The purpose of this study is to understand the impacts of volunteering at a student-run free clinic, Cass Clinic, on undergraduate students. We will examine the following objectives:

- Influence on students' **intention to pursue a role in healthcare**
- Students' **preparation** for future healthcare roles (according to the AAMC Interpersonal Competencies¹)
- What students have **learned**
- How Cass can be **improved**

Methods

An emailed survey was sent to all undergraduate students who volunteered with Cass Clinic from 2020-2023.



Methods

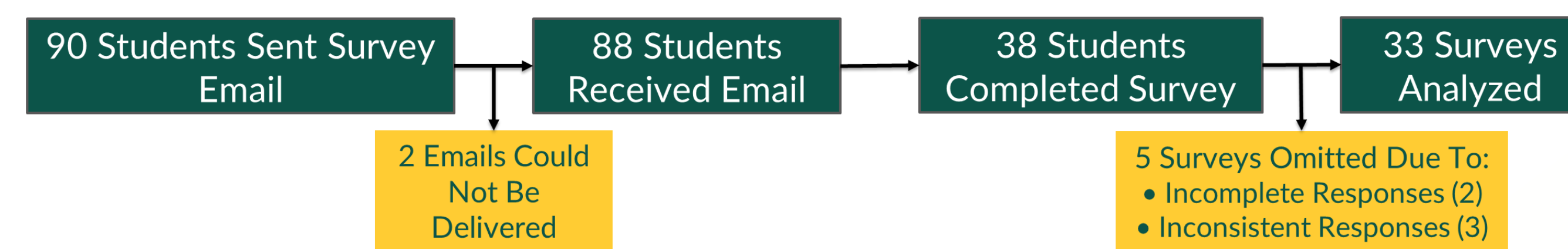


Figure 1. Distribution of surveys sent to students

Results

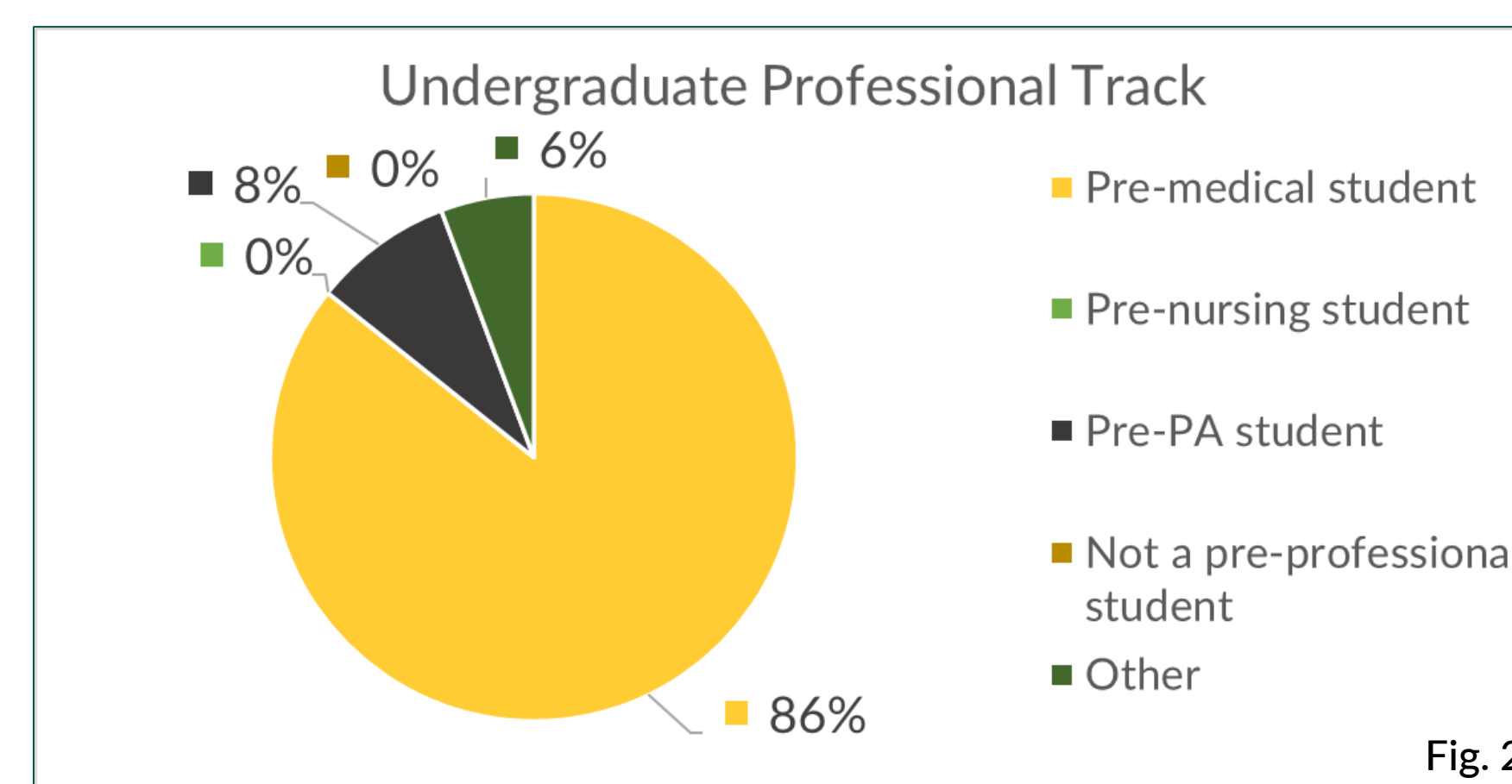


Figure 2. 94% of students are pre-health.

Figure 3. Clinic did not have a significant impact on increasing students' likelihood to pursue a healthcare role (94% somewhat/extremely likely before and after clinic).

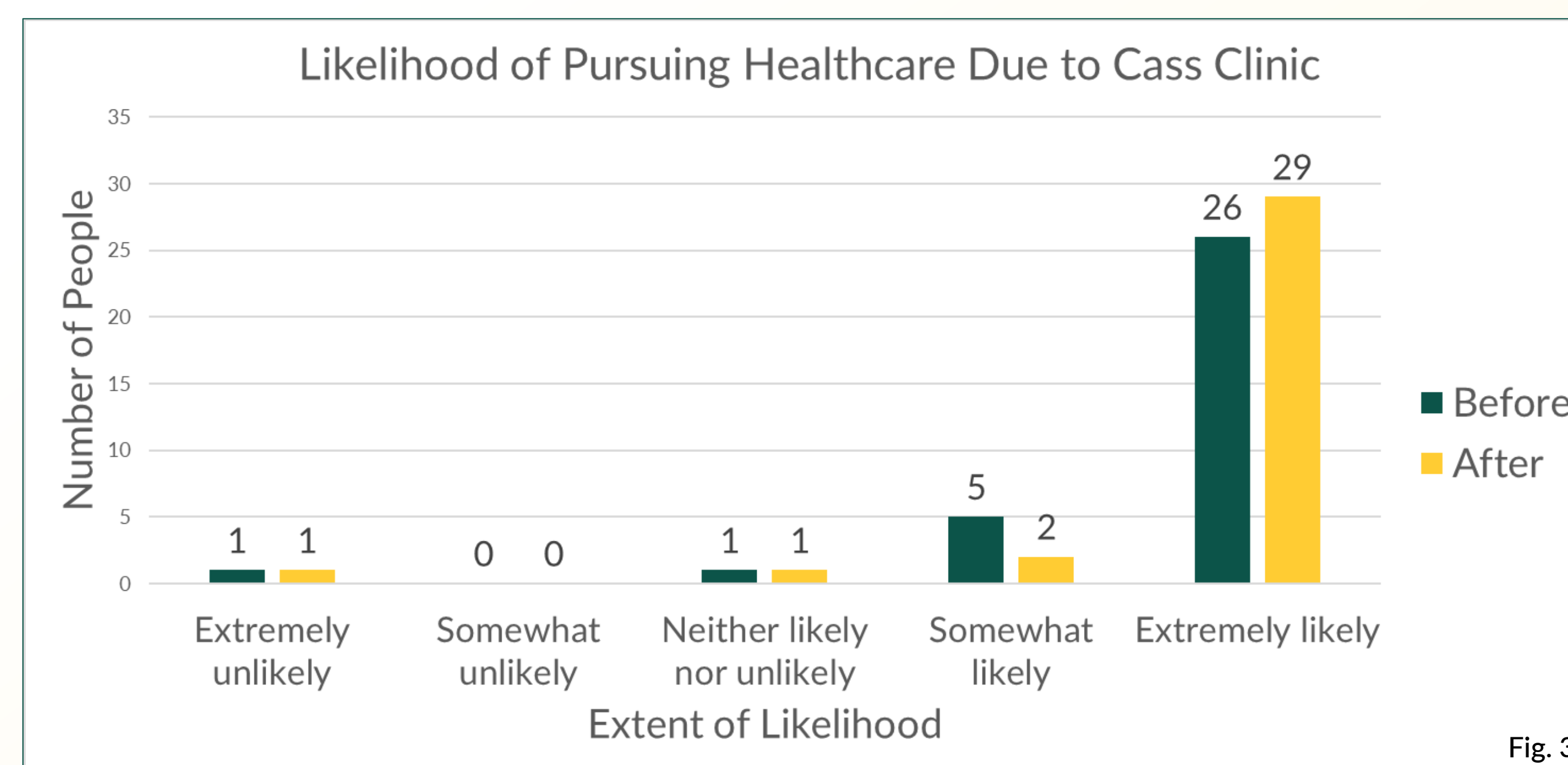


Fig. 3

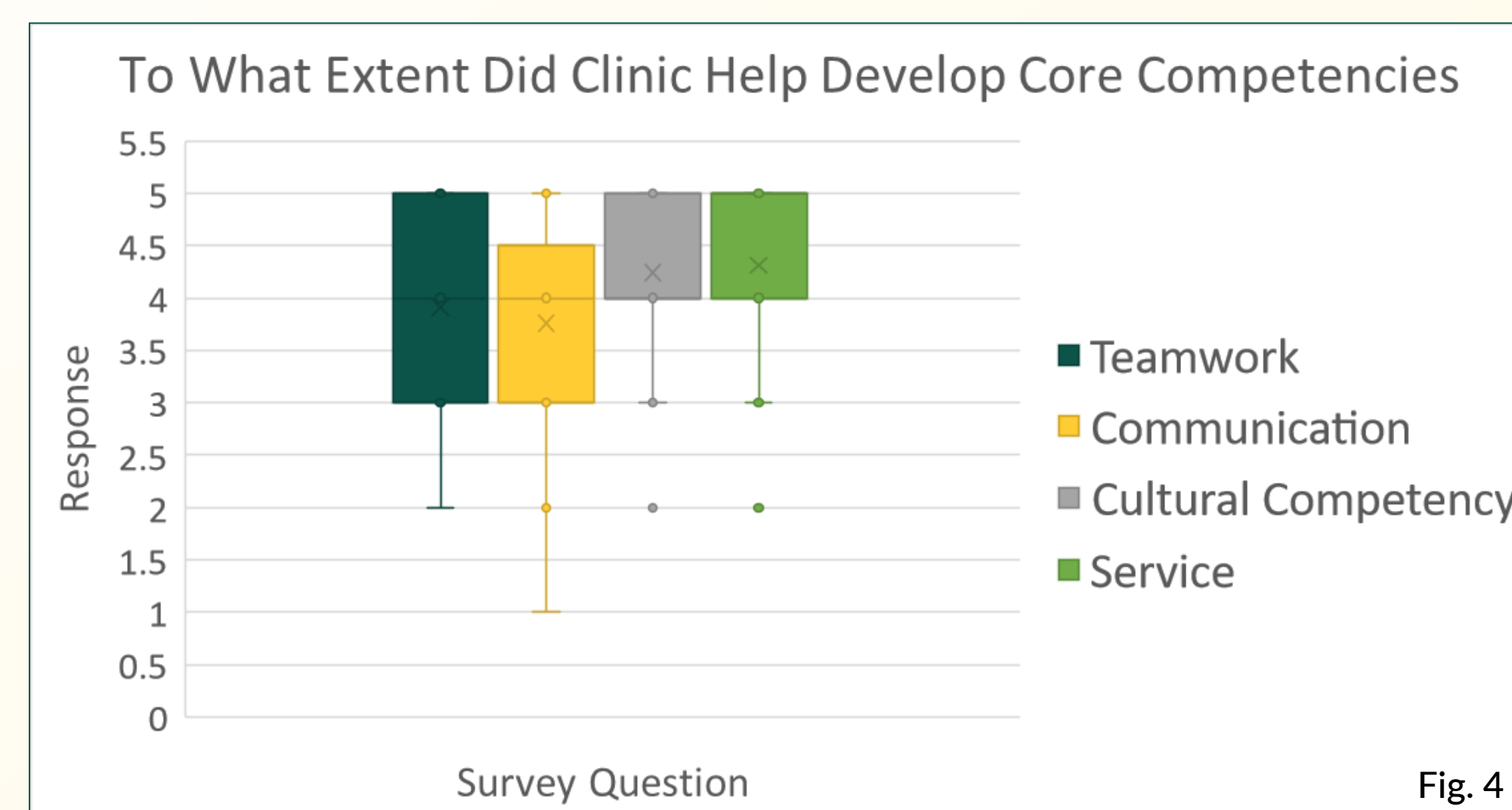


Figure 4. Clinic helped students develop their core competencies, specifically teamwork, communication skills, cultural competency, and service orientation.

- Clinic improved students' knowledge of the healthcare needs in Detroit
- Increased self-efficacy in providing care for underserved populations
- Association between **understanding** underserved health needs and feeling comfortable **working** with the population
- Association between **increased self-efficacy** in serving underserved populations and an **interest in working** with this population in the future

Results

More hands-on PROFESSIONAL GOALS
Pursue healthcare
No changes to clinic
Core competencies
UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS
Medical knowledge
LEARN ABOUT CARE
MORE OPPORTUNITIES
No perspective change

"My perspective has shifted and is focused on becoming a physician who is culturally competent to close the gap between these health disparities."

"I expected to shadow the medical students, however, I was more involved with the process and learned a tremendous amount. I achieved more than I thought I would."

"I saw first-hand that there is absolutely a need for something like Cass Clinic in Detroit to help serve those who may not be able to afford healthcare."

"I learned the right way to communicate with patients and how to ease into certain questions without sounding harsh or demanding."

"Cass made me realize that compassion is the most important skill to have when caring for people."

Conclusion

- Volunteering at Cass does not make students more likely to choose a medical career, but the experience helps undergraduates become better prepared for a career in healthcare.
- Clinic did not have a significant impact on influencing students to pursue healthcare because students already had a strong desire to pursue medicine.

Positive impacts of clinic on learning and preparation:

- Develop core competencies: teamwork, communication, cultural competency
- Understanding the needs of medically underserved populations
- Increased self-efficacy in working with underserved populations
- Shaped future career goals (e.g. targeting disparities)
- Understanding the components of quality care

To date, there have not been studies examining the impact of a student-run free clinic as a learning tool for undergraduates. This study will reveal new insights into how to better design clinics to provide students with an improved learning experience, and how it can be used to assist students in pursuing future healthcare roles. Future studies should examine the effects of long-term volunteering at the clinic. It is possible that more frequent volunteering can reveal more insights into how clinic influences students' learning and perspectives of medicine.

References

1. The Core Competencies for Entering Medical Students. Accessed September 20, 2023. Students & Residents. <https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/article/core-competencies>