INTRODUCTION

• In Texas, over 66.8% of adults are overweight or obese (1). The obese are often a target for bias and stigma in the society and in the healthcare system, equally (2). Heavier patients are more likely to cancel appointments and preventive health care services, particularly if they were women (3,4).

HYPOTHESIS & PROBLEM STATEMENT

• An educational intervention in a problem based learning (PBL) case including a self-awareness test, a video of an obese patient encounter, and a group discussion will raise student awareness of their own biases and that of patient needs.

METHODS & PROJECT DESCRIPTION

• Multiple methods approach was implemented. On day 1 of the PBL case on obesity and diabetes, second year medical students at UTMB (n=111/119) assessed their anti-obesity bias using the Nutrition, Exercise and Weight management (NEW) scale (5).

• Data on students BMI and sex were collected. Following the assessment, students studied the case, seeing a video that has been specifically designed as an intervention for this case: an actor portraying the physical characteristics of an obese patient and stating her struggle with weight gain and discrimination in the healthcare system.

RESULTS

• On day 3 of the case, the students were given the overall Year 2 results of Day 1 survey. In addition, they were asked to: Q1) reflect and write any new thoughts or concerns they have had about obese patients over the past week and Q2) write 3 recommendations to support and manage obese patients in clinic (n=219/233).

• A month later, 8 students (M:F ratio = 1:1) underwent a focus group discussion (FGD) on the use of video in the case.

STATISTICS

• Scoring the (NEW) scale was accumulative for all items (score range −118 to 118; higher scores indicate more positive attitudes (5)).

• Descriptive analysis was done to assess students’ anti-obesity bias using paired t-test analysis (GraphPad Prism version 5.04) and are presented as means ± SE.

• Qualitative analysis for the students’ recommendations was done.

CONCLUSION

• Medical students exhibited bias towards obese patients.

• Female students had more favorable attitudes.

• An interventional video:
  − Increased students’ awareness of own biases
  − Allowed them to visualize patient as a real person
  − Promoted their empathy/compassion
  − Encouraged them to reconsider their future clinical practices with obese patients

REFERENCES

1. 2009 Texas Behavioral Risk Factors Surveillance System, Center for Health Statistics, Department of State Health Services.