**INTRODUCTION:**

**Disability**
- Facts:
  - Physical or mental impairment that significantly impacts an individual’s ability to perform one or more major life activities
  - 19% of US population in 2010
- Significance:
  - Experience difficulties or delays when attempting to obtain medical care
  - Encounter obstacles once in the system
    - Physical barriers (accessibility)
    - Inadequately trained providers (behaviors, knowledge & skills)
- Outcome:
  - Deterred from seeking and/or barred from receiving necessary services
- Resolution:
  - Educational interventions

**Goal**
- To identify potential areas of curricular enhancement, which would improve medical students’ delivery of care to individuals with disabilities

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

**Activity Logistics**
- High-stakes Clinical Skills Assessment
- 4th Year Medical Students (~215)
- 2 Cases - Head & Neck Chief Complaint
- 4 Standardized Patients (SPs)
- Wheelchair (replaced regular patient chair)
- Observe how senior medical students interact with a patient who has a potential physical disability
- Disability Questionnaire

**RESULTS:**

- Broad Spectrum
  - Explored patient’s disability
  - Focused solely on the disability
  - Exaggerated expression of empathy
  - Avoided the disability

**Observations**
- Δ “I noticed you’re in a wheelchair. Can you tell me about your disability?”
  - “You’re in a wheelchair today. What’s going on with that?”
  - “Are you using the wheelchair because it’s the only chair available?”
- Δ “Are you able to walk?”
- Δ “Can you get on the exam table?”
- Δ “Are you more comfortable in the wheelchair?”
  - Assumed patient could not ambulate
  - Overlooked patient’s proclamation
  - Δ “Do you need assistance getting on the table?”
  - “Do you mind hopping up there?”
  - Δ “Do you need help getting back down?”
  - Patient left on the exam table

**Project Challenges**
- SPs’ portrayal of a disability
- Familiarity of students and SPs
- Flaws in the script and questionnaire

**REFERENCES:**


**CONCLUSION:**

Observations of senior medical students provided valuable information, which will be utilized during an upcoming formal study. Research indicates both students and patients will benefit if the results of this study lead to the deliberate addition of disability education into the curriculum. Specifically, these interactions will enhance students’ perception of disabled patients as well as teach them how to provide quality care to this marginalized population.