Utilization of laboratory based patient scenarios in a PTA neurology course improved the students’ perceptions of evidence-based practice. As an added outcome measure, data suggested that the activity improved the students’ abilities to practice EBP within the laboratory setting, on model patients.

Based upon the pre-survey results, students had a relatively positive perception of EBP prior to the start of the activity. When the post-survey results were analyzed, the students’ perceptions of EBP improved on all questions. The first six questions asked students’ feelings regarding EBP and what they believe they had seen in practice. The last six questions were focused more upon the performance of EBP staff and the comfort level of the student with each step of the process. The results showed a range of increasing from 7.58% to 11.34% across all questions.

Limitations included utilizing mock patients that were instructors or other students, as program is not allowed to have actual patients for familiar reasons. Another limitation was giving feedback to the students following each session, which may have led to the noted improved performance on the final post-survey. Finally, with multiple students assigned the same scenario, the activity became a race against each other to complete the scenario, which may have led to the noted improved performance on the final post-survey.

Recommendations for future studies include utilizing real patients rather than mock patients, so the students can actually experience the impact of the intervention on a real patient. Another recommendation is to find more students to participate in this study, as the sample size was small and may not be representative of the entire population of PTA students. Additionally, future studies could include using objective measures to assess changes in student knowledge and performance.

References

Chart 2: Initial Lecture Survey Data

Conclusions
Utilization of laboratory based patient scenarios in a PTA neurology course improved the students’ perceptions of evidence-based practice, students increased their confidence in their role in applying EBP, and there was an improvement in the students’ ability to apply the new knowledge in the clinical setting. However, there were limitations to this study, including the small sample size and the possibility of bias due to the student’s prior knowledge of EBP.

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Utilization of Laboratory Based Patient Scenarios in a Physical Therapist Assistant Neurology Class Improve the Students’ Perceptions of Evidence-based Based Practice (EBP): A Case Report

Does Utilizing Laboratory Based Patient Scenarios in a Physical Therapist Assistant Neurology Class Improve the Students’ Perceptions of Evidence-based Based Practice (EBP): A Case Report

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BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE: Physical therapist assistants (PTAs) are expected to be able to practice (PRP) without direct access to patient care, yet no research exists in the area of EBP from the PTA perspective. The purpose of this case report is to investigate PTA students’ perceptions of EBP after the use of laboratory scenarios.

CASE DESCRIPTION: Fourteen PTA students were given a twelve- question survey to complete regarding their perceptions of EBP prior to beginning their initial lecture in EBP and again as a follow up upon completion of the four lab sessions.

OUTCOMES: Means of the pre-survey results, post-survey results, as well as percent change were analyzed using a positive change in perception of EBP from B-to-A as a measure of success. The results showed a range of increasing from 7.58% to 11.34% across all questions.

Based upon the pre-survey results, students had a relatively positive perception of EBP prior to the start of the activity. When the post-survey results were analyzed, the students’ perceptions of EBP improved on all questions. The first six questions asked students’ feelings regarding EBP and what they believe they had seen in practice. The last six questions were focused more upon the performance of EBP staff and the comfort level of the student with each step of the process. The results showed a range of increasing from 7.58% to 11.34% across all questions.

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