INTRODUCTION

- Family physicians play a key role in preventing and managing obesity, a growing problem in society.
- There is a lack of obesity education in medical school, resulting in physicians who lack confidence and are poorly equipped to manage obesity in a clinical setting.
- The 5As Team piloted a two-day obesity training module for family medicine residents at the University of Alberta to address this gap in education.

METHODS

- The 5As Team hosted a focus group with physicians and medical students to identify key deficiencies in obesity education.
- Learning objectives from this focus group were adapted to a training module consisting of:
  - Intro to weight bias
  - Bariatric suit experience
  - Patient presentation
  - Lecture on 5As of Obesity
  - Interactive group discussion
  - Standardized patient interviews
  - Narrative reflection exercises
- Validated ATOP (Attitudes Toward Obese Persons) and BAOP (Beliefs About Obese Persons) questionnaires were administered to study participants pre- and post-intervention to monitor their change in attitudes and beliefs.
- De-identified pre- and post-knowledge assessments, as well as narrative reflections were also administered. Data collected was used to monitor participants’ change in confidence with regards to obesity management.

RESULTS

Did the bariatric suit experience generate greater awareness of the complexity of obesity and decrease weight bias?

- Rigid framework
- Asking permission
- Lack of practical advice
- Selective, cursory use of 5As

Did the 5AsT patient encounter improve participants’ knowledge and self-efficacy in their weight counselling practice?

- 5AsT Patient Encounter

Quantitative Improvements Pre- vs. Post-Intervention (p<0.05):

- More positive belief that obesity is NOT under patient control
- Increased confidence...
  1. Advising patients on treatment options
  2. Advising patients on strategies to manage weight
  3. Agreeing with patients on goals for health outcomes
  4. Counseling patients on weight related depression and anxiety
  5. Counseling patients on iatrogenic causes of weight gain

DISCUSSION

- BAOP questionnaires revealed a significant improvement in study participants’ beliefs about obese persons post-intervention. However, ATOP questionnaires yielded no meaningful change in attitudes toward obese persons.
- Knowledge assessment questionnaires showed improvement in 5 of 22 parameters measuring confidence with regards to weight management (Fig. 3).
- Thematic analysis of narrative reflections highlighted several common themes pertaining to:
  1. Bariatric Suit Experience
  - Increased or unchanged empathy, evoked emotional responses, and stimulated critical self-reflection.
  2. 5AsT Patient Encounter
  - Highlighted challenges of the 5As of obesity, promoted self efficacy, and stimulated critical self-reflection.
- A larger sample size is needed to draw reliable conclusions.