

INTRODUCTION

The National Health Service is linguistically heterogeneous, and UK medical teaching should equip healthcare professionals with skills and tools to communicate effectively. Professional interpreters improve quality and access to care for Limited English Proficiency (LEP) patients compared to ad-hoc translation methods and family members.¹

For communication tools to be effective in their use, they should be applied with a foundation of cultural awareness.^{1,2} Current practice fails the needs of LEP patients, reflected in the disproportionately poorer health outcomes experienced by this group.³

Research is limited surrounding the presence and effectiveness of current undergraduate training in this area.³

OBJECTIVES

To understand whether Swansea University medical students are equipped with the tools, skills and cultural awareness to communicate with LEP patients. To determine whether introducing teaching at the undergraduate level can address gaps in knowledge, skills and cultural awareness.

METHOD

Survey data was collected and analysed using Microsoft Forms and Excel. Teaching was delivered through Zoom. There were three study stages. Stage 1, pre-teaching survey assessing preparation and confidence communicating with LEP patients. Stage 2, virtual teaching for 60 minutes followed by a 15 minutes question-and-answer session. Stage 3, post-teaching survey to assess the benefits, pitfalls and desire for such future teaching.

TEACHING OUTLINE

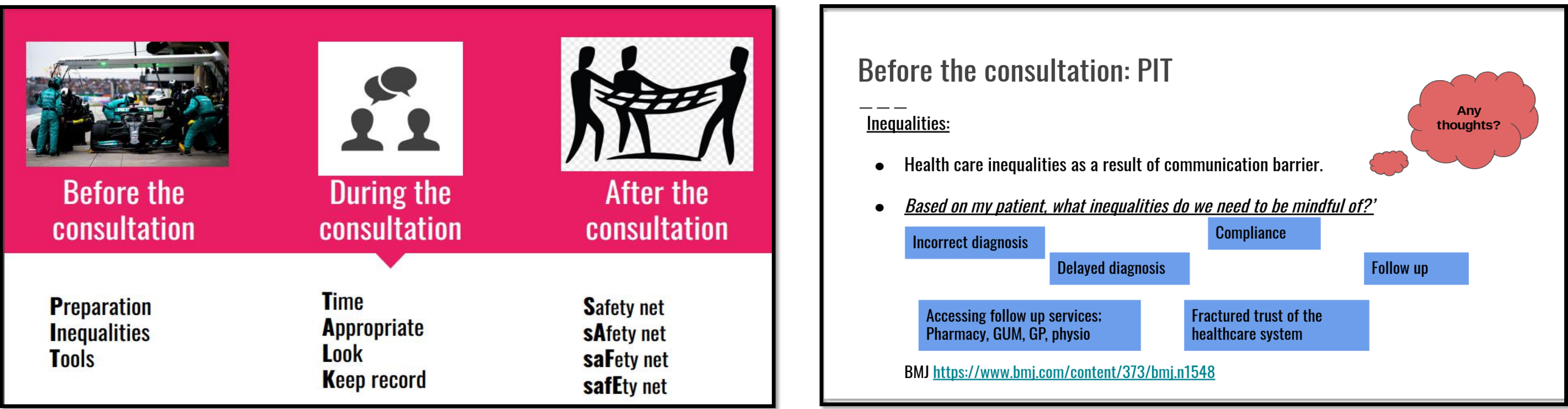


Figure 1: 75-minute teaching, 16 slides including: Mnemonic tool developed for aiding students to approach the LEP consultation; Use of question prompts to encourage discussion and participation; Sign-posting to articles and sources for further learning sources.

RESULTS

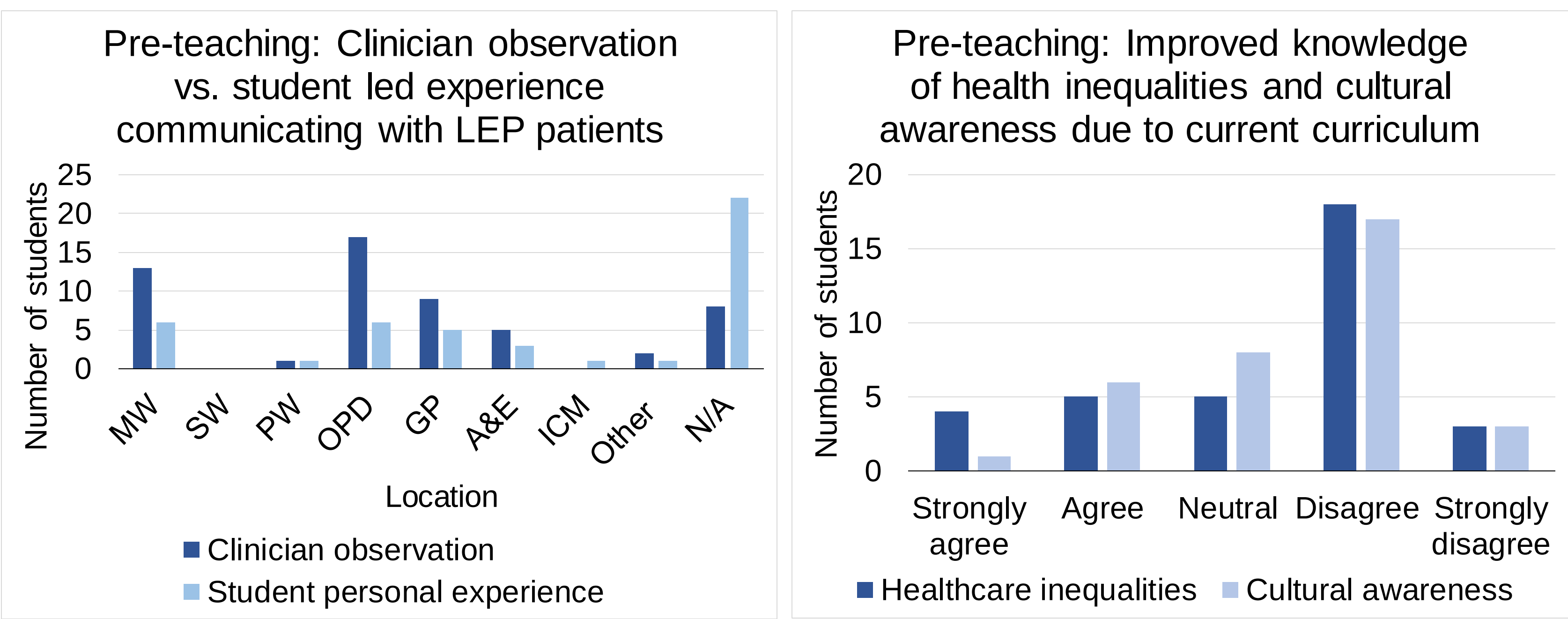


Figure 2: W-ward, M-medical, S-surgical, P-psychiatric, ICM-Integrated Clinical Method (Introduction to clinical medicine). Other-ITU,GP reception.

Figure 3

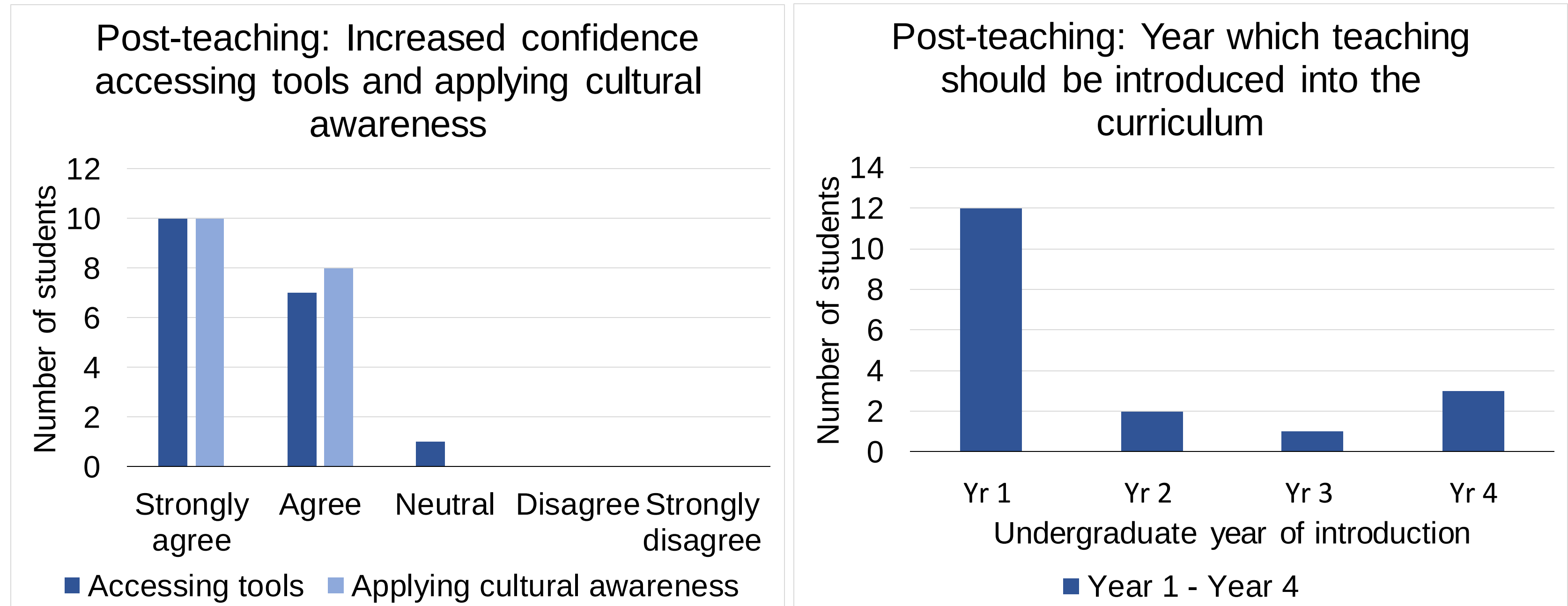


Figure 4

Figure 5

CONCLUSION

Surgical wards and ICM accounted for the lowest amount of clinician-observed and student-led communication with LEP patients. The current curriculum did not improve students' knowledge of health inequalities and cultural awareness.

Following teaching, there was an increase in confidence accessing tools and applying cultural awareness.

Although data overrepresented final year students, a reasonable conclusion can be made that this study represented teaching received by at least one cohort throughout their undergraduate training.

This study was not without its limitations and is best described as a pilot study, creating a model for further research and development in this area of undergraduate teaching.

FUTURE PROSPECTS

To improve access to healthcare for LEP patients, the medical profession need to be aware of measures to mitigate challenges faced by these patients. Swansea University Medical School will be implementing this into its curriculum, delivered during students' Obstetrics & Gynaecology placement.

REFERENCES

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