

Methods for enhancing midwifery students’ knowledge & attitudes on LGBTQ+ health-rights; ATHENA study

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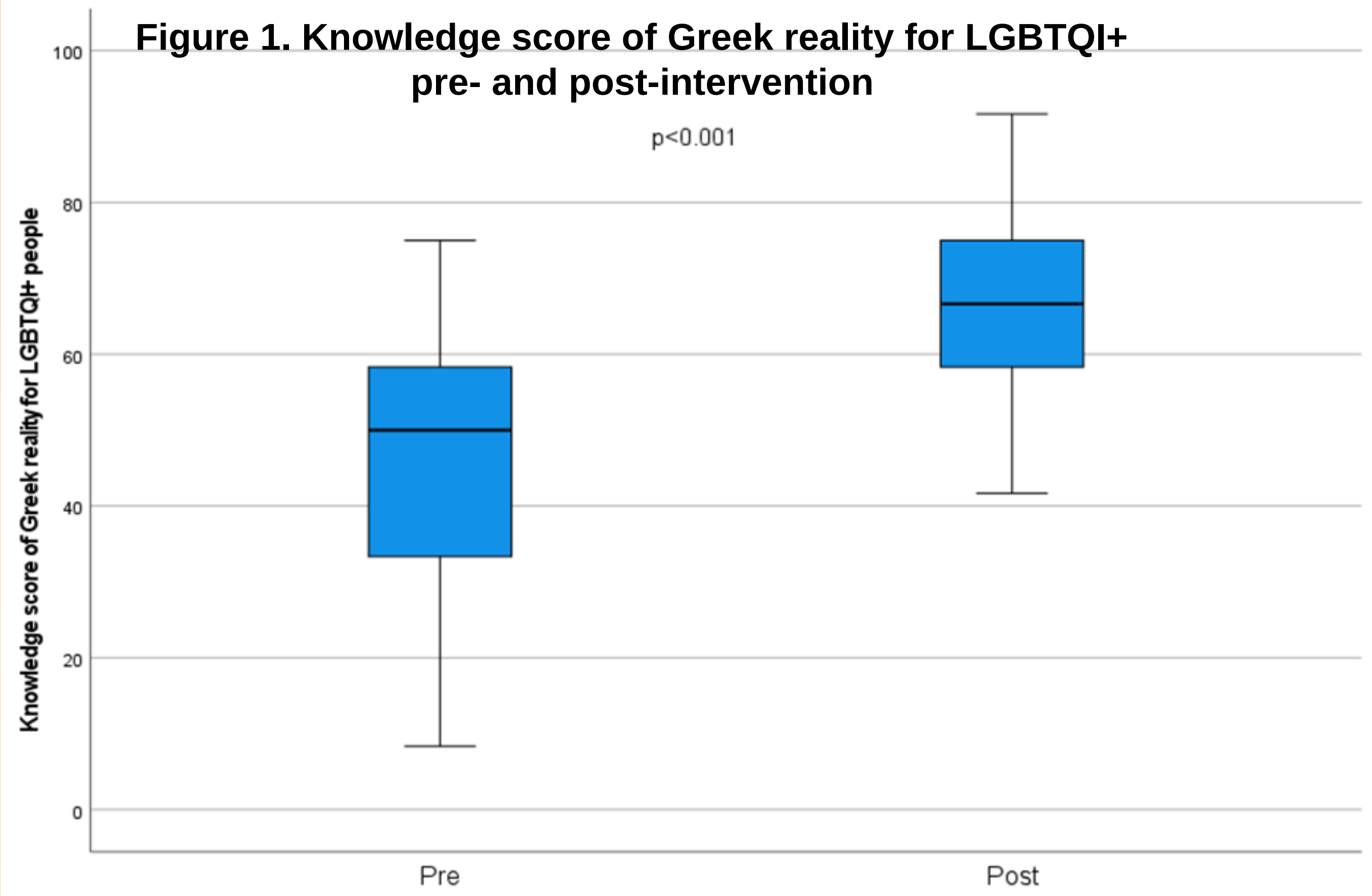
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Objective: LGBTQ+ individuals face higher health disparities, often influenced by healthcare providers' attitudes. However, little research has focused on how healthcare students are trained to recognize and address their own biases towards LGBTQ+ individuals. This study is the first to examine the impact of a structured educational intervention on final-year midwifery students' knowledge and attitudes regarding LGBTQ+ health rights.

Design: Our study design includes an initial assessment of student midwives' knowledge and attitudes, followed by a 3-hour small-group training session with a lecture, case-based discussions, and group conversation on gender equality, reproductive rights, and perinatal care for LGBTQ+ individuals. A final assessment was carried out at the workshop's completion.

Method: Calls for participation were made to student midwives via the study's webpage <https://www.athenastudy.gr/> from July to November 2024. A total of 70 volunteers attended training sessions in November and December 2024, held at three different venues in Greece. After the intervention, 61 participants completed the post-training surveys, yielding an 87.2% response rate. We used the Wahlen’s et al.(2020)¹ questionnaire after validating to Greek population and an ad-hoc knowledge assessment tool to evaluate the understanding of LGBTQ+ intrapartum health needs.



n=61		Mean	SD
Age		21.8	2.0
		n	%
Gender	Men	1	1.6
	Women	60	98.4
Nationality	Greek	58	95.1
	Other	3	4.9
Religion	Christian Orthodox	51	83.6
	None	7	11.5
	Muslim	1	1.6
Do you consider yourself religious	Don't want to answer	2	3.3
	No	31	50.8
	Yes	30	49.2
Sexual orientation	Heterosexual	49	80.3
	Homosexual	3	4.9
	Bysexual	5	8.2
	Unknown/ In search	2	3.3
Sexual identity	Don't want to answer	2	3.3
	Male	2	3.3
	Female	59	96.7



Results: The participants’ mean age was 21.8±2 years. Most participants (80.3%, n=49) identified as heterosexual, and 98.4% (n=60) as female. Prior to the intervention, most students held favorable attitudes towards LGBTQ+ individuals, which strengthened afterward.

Religious students showed significantly less positive attitudes (p=0.01) and worse judgment (p=0.001) towards the LGBTQ+ population compared to their non-religious peers. More positive attitudes were significantly linked to greater knowledge (r=0.30; p=0.002). The ad-hoc assessment tool showed a significant increase in participants’ knowledge of intrapartum care after the intervention (5.59±1.96 vs 7.80±1.43, p<0.01).

Conclusions: Midwifery students generally exhibited a positive attitude toward LGBTQ+ health rights. However, despite being in their final year of undergraduate training, they demonstrated limited knowledge regarding the specific health needs of LGBTQ+ individuals—a finding consistent with previous research involving other healthcare students^{2,3}. Notably, our study showed that targeted educational interventions significantly improved both the knowledge and attitudes of midwifery students toward LGBTQ+ health, aligning with outcomes reported in similar studies⁴.

References:

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