

Hospital Affiliation:	UCLA Medical Center						
Presenter Name (Last, First):	Salles Araujo, Thais						
Co-Authors:	Cantor, Emily Castro, Camila						
Project Title:	Pilot project on acceptance and interest of medical students in psychedelics science						
Research Category (please check one):							
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Abstract

Abstract Form

Background: There is increasing research and public interest in the therapeutic use of psychedelics among select patient groups, particularly in palliative and end-of-life care. Other complementary and integrative modalities, such as acupuncture, healing touch and aromatherapy, have already been brought into some palliative care programs. Yet, most health professionals and medical trainees in the US have limited to no medical experience with psychedelics sciences. As the field of psychedelic medicine evolves, it may be strategic to intervene at the medical and health professional trainee level to grow awareness on the potential benefits for their future patients. From our review online, there are currently no published articles or medical school websites that include core competencies or basic curriculum on psychedelics for medical students nor about their potential openness and interest in the topic.

Objectives:

Overall, this small pilot study aimed to explore the impacts of a lecture on integrative palliative care and psychedelics therapies on 4th year medical students' openness and interest in these topics. The study is ongoing. Pilot data is presented below.

Methodology:

A pre- and post-survey design was used to evaluate the impact of a 60-minute powerpoint presentation on the topic of integrative palliative care and psychedelics, which was given as part of an integrative medicine clerkship and by an MD expert in the field. The lecture was followed by a Q&A session. Ten participants were recruited for this first pilot, and all completed surveys pre and post. The pre-survey assessed baseline levels of knowledge, perceptions, and primary areas of interest within the field. After the lecture, all participants completed a post-survey to assess the impact of the class. The data collected from the surveys were analyzed using the paired samples t-test to evaluate any changes in knowledge, perceptions, and areas of interest in integrative palliative care and psychedelics therapies after the lecture.

Results:

Prior to the presentation, 6 participants rated their interest in hospice and palliative care at 4 to 5 on a 5-point scale. Following the presentation, the proportion of participants with a high level of interest in hospice and palliative care increased to 7 out of 10. In contrast, the interest in psychedelic sciences increased from 70% to 90%, with topics such as historic roots, therapeutic purposes, and pharmacology being the most interesting to the participants. Regarding knowledge of psychedelic sciences, 70% of students had no prior training in the subject. Prior to the presentation, 40% had neutral to somewhat negative perceptions of psychedelics. However, after the presentation, only one had neutral perceptions, and none held a negative view. The main concerns expressed by the participants regarding psychedelics were related to the associated risks, legal status, and lack of personal knowledge. Overall, 90% of participants expressed interest in deepening their knowledge in psychedelic sciences, and they would recommend the curriculum to their colleagues.

Conclusion:

The findings of this initial pilot intervention suggest that the 60-minute presentation on hospice and palliative care and psychedelics sciences was effective in increasing the interest and positive perceptions of these topics among the 10 participants surveyed. The preliminary results also suggest a need for further education and training in these areas, particularly in regards to psychedelics, as the majority of participants had no prior training in this topic and expressed interest in deepening their knowledge. However, the study has some limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. The small sample size of only 10 participants limits the generalizability of the results. Additionally, the short duration of the lecture may have restricted the depth and breadth of information that could be conveyed to the participants. Future studies with larger sample sizes and longer lecture times are needed to confirm these findings and further explore the effects of education on attitudes and knowledge towards hospice and palliative care and psychedelic sciences.