

# Student Identification of Barriers to Care for Medically Underserved Patients Following an Introductory Pharmacy Practice Experience

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## Background

- Early reflection on identifying and using culturally sensitive practices sets a foundation for students as they advance through the curriculum<sup>1</sup>
- After a 40-hour community pharmacy introductory pharmacy practice experience (IPPE), first-year (P1) students completed reflections that included describing an experience related to medically underserved populations that impacted them

## Objective

To determine P1 student identification of barriers to care among medically underserved populations during an IPPE

## Methods

### IPPE Experience

- P1 Students completed a 40-hour IPPE in a community pharmacy setting
- Underserved populations were defined using the HHS definitions<sup>2</sup>

### Reflection Completion

- After their rotation, students reflected on:
  - 1) Populations they interacted with
  - 2) Experiences related to a medically underserved population

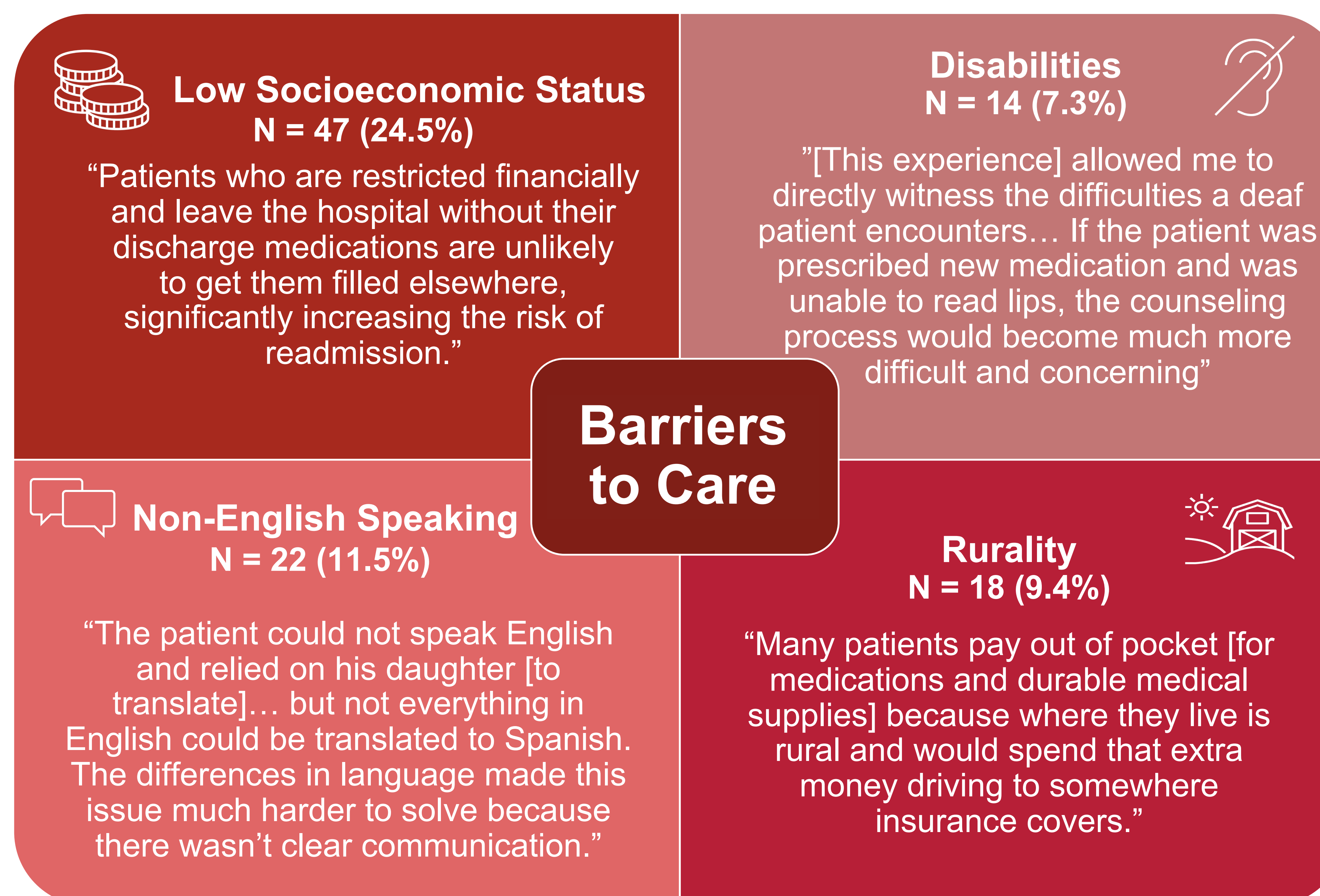
### Content Analysis

- 2 years of P1 IPPEs included
  - Spring 2023 and Spring 2024
- Research team developed codebook
- Coding was conducted using Dedoose
  - 24.4% of reflections were coded in duplicate to ensure inter-rater reliability
- Themes were identified related to barriers to care among medically underserved populations

## Results

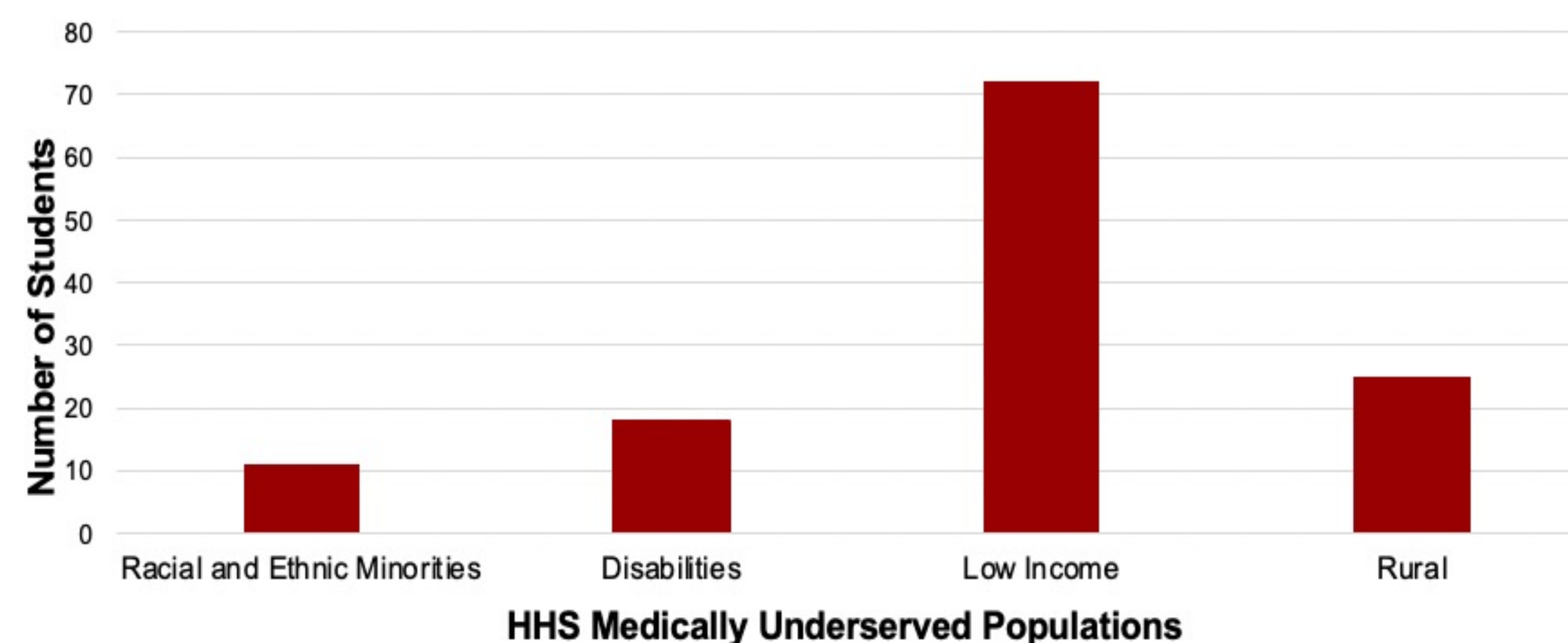
- 192 students completed reflections
- 140 (72.9%) students identified 1 or more specific medically underserved population(s)
- 102 (53.4%) students identified at least one barrier to care

Figure 1. Student identified barriers to care



Other barriers to care identified included low health literacy, immigration, and discrimination

Figure 2. HHS medically underserved populations<sup>2</sup> identified in reflections



## Discussion

- P1 students' IPPE reflections demonstrates student understanding and awareness of the barriers to care that medically underserved populations experience
- This assignment can be broadly applied to a variety of pharmacy programs to assess student identification of barriers to care for medically underserved populations
- **Additional Questions to Explore**
  - How does student understanding of barriers to care impact student provision of care to medically underserved populations?
  - Does the proportion of medically underserved patients at the pharmacy influence student observations and reflections?
- **Future Directions**
  - Revise reflection prompts for clarity
  - Creation of preceptor development materials to support teaching about medically underserved populations<sup>2</sup>
  - Curriculum revisions to better prepare students to identify medically underserved populations

## References

1. Drame, et al. Strategies for Incorporating Health Disparities and Cultural Competency Training into the Pharmacy Curriculum and Co-curriculum. *Am J Pharm Educ.* 2022. doi: 10.5688/ajpe8631
2. US Department of Health and Human Services. Serving vulnerable and underserved populations. [https://www.hhs.gov/guidance/sites/default/files/hhs-guidance-documents/006\\_Serving\\_Vulnerable\\_and\\_Underserved\\_Populations.pdf](https://www.hhs.gov/guidance/sites/default/files/hhs-guidance-documents/006_Serving_Vulnerable_and_Underserved_Populations.pdf)

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