

# Assessment of Pharmacy Student Bias Towards HIV Patients on an IPE Experience

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## BACKGROUND

- HIV stigma among healthcare providers remains a concern and can negatively impact care for people living with HIV (PLHIV).<sup>1</sup>
- Pharmacy students and pharmacists play a crucial role in HIV care but may hold stigmatizing attitudes that could affect patient care.<sup>2</sup>
- Interprofessional education (IPE) experiences have shown promise in reducing stigma and improving attitudes towards HIV care across healthcare disciplines.<sup>3</sup>
- The Health Care Provider HIV/AIDS Stigma Scale (HPASS) is a validated tool to measure HIV stigma among healthcare providers, assessing prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination.<sup>4</sup>
- Limited research exists on the impact of IPE experiences specifically on pharmacy students' attitudes towards PLHIV.<sup>5</sup>

## OBJECTIVE

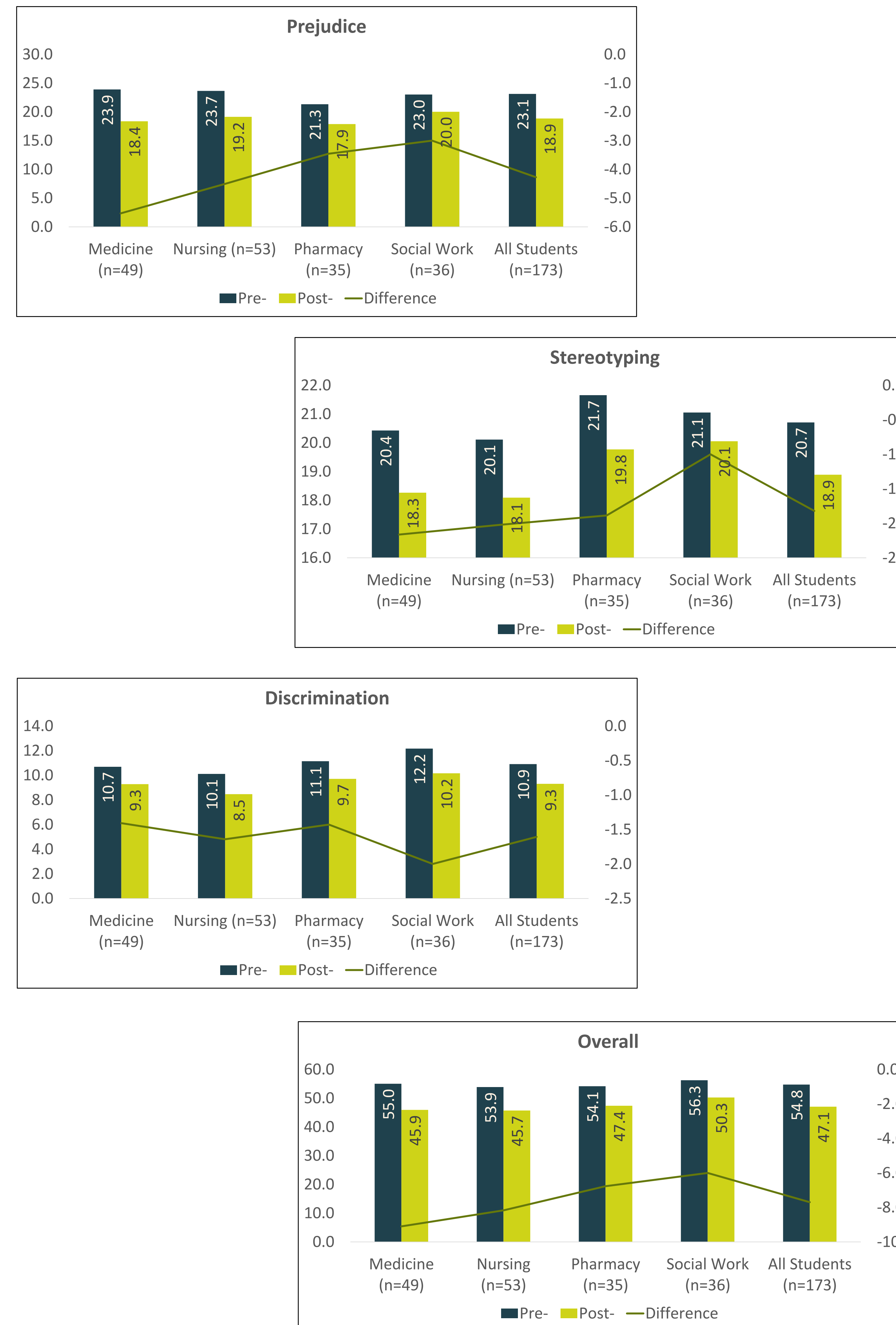
- To evaluate the impact of an interprofessional HIV clinical rotation on pharmacy students' attitudes and stigma towards PLHIV.

## METHODS

- Study Setting:** SC HIV/AIDS Training Center at USC Immunology Clinic in Columbia, SC (2016-2024)
- Participants:** 176 health professional students, including 35 pharmacy students
- Two-week interprofessional rotation featuring:
  - Didactic lectures on HIV and interprofessional practice
  - Various clinical experiences across disciplines
  - Team-based HIV-positive patient visits
  - Development of comprehensive care plans
- Data Collection:** Pre- and post-rotation surveys assessing HIV-related stigma using the HPASS 30-item questionnaire with 5-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree)
  - Prejudice (13 items)
  - Stereotyping (11 items)
  - Discrimination (6 items)
- Analysis:** Paired t-tests comparing pre- and post-rotation HPASS scores; Effect sizes calculated using Cohen's d

## RESULTS

FIGURE 1: Change in HPASS Score by Profession



## KEY POINTS

- Short-term clinical rotations can positively impact attitudes toward HIV
- Interprofessional education is valuable for reducing stigma
- More research needed on long-term impacts and other health professions

## DISCUSSION

### Conclusions

- Significant reduction in overall HPASS scores for pharmacy students (pre: 54.1, post: 47.4, change: -6.8,  $p < 0.05$ )
- Improvements observed across all three HPASS subscales (prejudice, stereotyping, discrimination)
- Pharmacy students' change (-6.8) was comparable to other disciplines: medicine (-9.1), nursing (-8.2), and social work (-6.0)
- The intentional design of the rotation, including direct interaction with PLHIV, likely contributed to the reduction in stigma
- Findings align with previous research showing IPE experiences can reduce HIV stigma among healthcare students
- The multi-disciplinary nature of the rotation may have enhanced pharmacy students' understanding of their role in comprehensive HIV care

### Limitations

- Short-term follow-up; long-term impact unknown
- Potential selection bias due to voluntary participation
- Single-site study may limit generalizability

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**Disclosures:** Authors of this presentation have no financial or personal relationships with commercial entities relevant to this presentation to disclose.

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