The Menopause and Minority Health Project: An Innovative and Interdisciplinary Education Project

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Background

- Perimenopause represents a risk for new onset or exacerbation of mental health conditions.
- Vasomotor symptoms (VMS), cognitive changes, sleep disruption and sexual dysfunction are common complaints and overlap with common psychiatric disorders.
- Significant racial/ethnic disparities in the menopause experience are evident. Compared to White women,
  - Black/African Americans are 8x higher risk for earlier menopause and experience more severe VMS.
  - Chinese and Japanese women report fewer VMS.
- Hispanic women report significantly more sexual dysfunction.
- The severity of VMS is higher among those from racial and ethnic minority groups.
- Cultural competence is critical to providing culturally relevant care.
- Education of physicians and other clinicians is critical to reducing treatment disparities for racially and ethnically diverse individuals experiencing menopause by improving provider knowledge and treatment approaches using an innovative and evidence-based curriculum.

Goal

The Menopause and Minority Health Project aimed to reduce diagnosis and treatment disparities for racially and ethnically diverse individuals experiencing menopause by improving provider knowledge and treatment approaches using an innovative and evidence-based curriculum.

Methods

- The curriculum was delivered via 7 weekly 1-hour sessions via zoom.
- Each module was enhanced with Extended Reality (XR) simulations using diverse avatar patients.
- Course improvements between cohort included ongoing instruction on utilizing the avatar experiences and implementation of live feedback on interactions with the avatar via a scoring system.
- Participants completed pre- and post-tests assessments and provided qualitative feedback about their overall experience.

Results

- Participants reported significant changes (p≥0.001) across all learning objectives.
- Participants reported 100% satisfaction with the Avatar experience.
- Most participants found the Avatar experiences to be easy to use and helpful.
- Qualitative feedback indicated that participants valued the Avatar experiences and implementation of live feedback on interactions with the avatar via a scoring system.
- Participants completed pre- and post-tests assessments and provided qualitative feedback about their overall experience.

Conclusion

- The ECHO Colorado learning approach combined with innovative XR simulations resulted in positive improvements in confidence and skill in providing menopause care among a multidisciplinary group of clinicians.
- Participants increased their ability to recognize the potential impact of race and ethnicity on menopause experience and to incorporate a patient-centered approach to treatment planning.
- Qualitative feedback indicated that participants valued the interdisciplinary learning environment and felt empowered to provide evidence-based treatments within their practice setting.
- Most participants found the Avatar experiences to be easy to use and helpful.
- Improvements increased participant’s ease of use though did not result in discernable changes in the self-reported impact of avatar experience.

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