

Gender Differences in Health Literacy

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Introduction

- Health Literacy allows individuals to make informed decisions about one's health
- Understanding how gender influences health literacy will improve disparities between populations
- It is important to recognize implicit biases to ensure optimal healthcare delivery to every patient
- The ARK of Dothan is a "place of safety during the storms of life", that allows individuals to safely re-enter society after overcoming addiction.
- Medical students developed relationships with the residents living at the ARK, and provided them with health seminars on chosen topics to improve their health literacy
- This poster serves to synthesize the information gained from the health seminars delivered to The ARK and recognize how gender influences exposure to different health topics, and therefore healthcare decisions.

Methodology

Establish a relationship with the staff/residents at The ARK and discuss which topics would like to be presented

Student teams create presentations and surveys based on resident interest. Surveys evaluate the confidence of each resident regarding the question using a Likert Scale.

Residents fill out a survey prior to, and after conclusion of, the health seminars and subsequent discussions.

Data was compared across seminars and genders, noting which gender has a greater gain in confidence of knowledge during the seminar

Students reflect on their own experience, and what they have also learned.

Results

- The male group of residents exhibited increased amounts of knowledge gained during the Mental Health Seminar when compared to the female group of residents.
 - Prior to the seminar, the male group was 78% confident in their knowledge to access community resources, compared to 89% once the seminar concluded.
 - Conversely, the female group was 77% confident prior to the seminar, and 82% afterwards.

#	Question
1	I am confident in my knowledge about mental health
2	I believe that mental health is important
3	I know where to go for mental health support and community resources
4	I believe that it is important to see help regarding mental health
5	I believe that individuals with mental illness can recover
6	I believe it is okay to discuss my personal mental health

Chart 1. Mental Health Seminar Questions. These were the questions posed to the residents of The ARK of Dothan before and after they were given the mental health seminar.

Overall, both male and female groups showed an improvement in their confidence regarding knowledge of mental health (18.86% and 18.60% respectively), the male group showed a larger increase when asked about details discussed during the seminar.

Mental Health Seminar Data

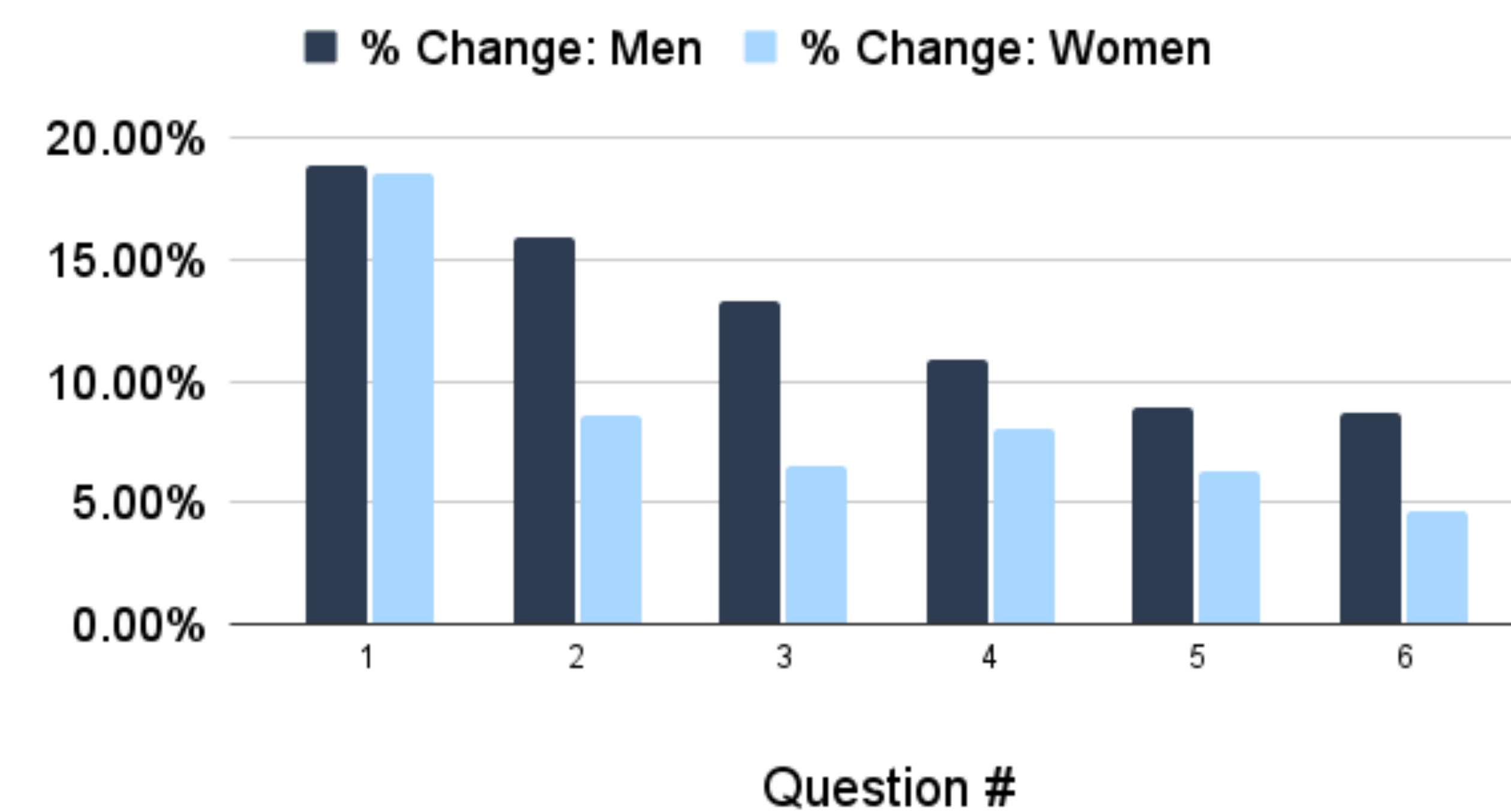


Figure 1. Mental Health Seminar Results. Highlights the % difference of confidence in pre-and post survey questions between men and women's groups.

- The female group of residents exhibited increased amounts of knowledge gained during the Heart Health Seminar when compared to the male group of residents.
 - Prior to the seminar, the female group was 64% confident in their knowledge about warning signs and symptoms of declining heart health, compared to 89% once the seminar was concluded.
 - Conversely, the male group was 70% confident prior to the seminar, and 84% afterwards.

Heart Health Seminar Data

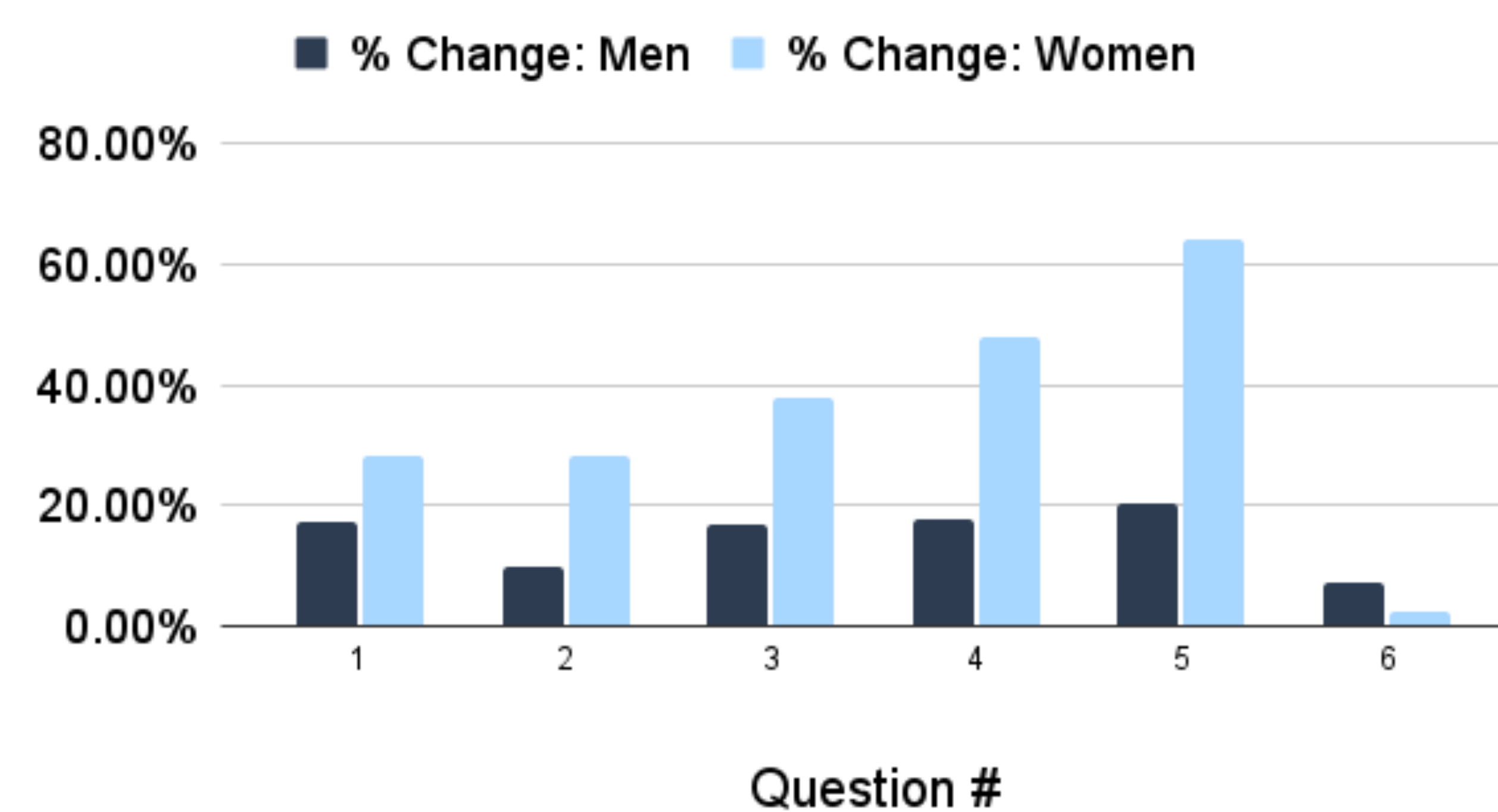


Figure 2. Heart Health Seminar Results. Highlights the % difference of confidence in pre-and post survey questions between men and women's groups.

#	Question
1	I am confident in my knowledge regarding heart health
2	I know what practices and diet I can implement to improve my heart health
3	I know the warning signs and symptoms of declining heart health
4	I know all the factors that can make up my cardiovascular health status
5	I know the different ways a heart attack can look in men and women
6	I understand how stress can affect my heart health

Chart 2. Heart Health Seminar Questions. These were the questions posed to the residents of The ARK of Dothan before and after they were given the heart health seminar.

Overall, both female and male groups had an improvement in their confidence regarding knowledge of heart health (28.13% and 17.07% respectively), the female group showed a larger increase when asked about details discussed during the seminar.

Discussion

- Self-managing health is integral to health aging and lowering disease burden
- It is important to keep in mind the background of the community that is being served, and ensure that you are providing them requisite information, so patients can make informed healthcare decisions.
- While healthcare literacy is a multi-faceted topic, where gender may be just one of the aspects, many are amenable to intervention to improve health outcomes. [1]
- Healthy patient-physician relationships will allow for comprehensive discussions between the two parties, allowing both to walk away satisfied with the healthcare plan.

Conclusion

- Gender is just one of the factors that influence a resident's prior confidence of knowledge for each seminar.
- While both the male and female groups showed a significant amount learned during each seminar, the post-seminar confidence in each group was comparable across the various concepts.
- It is important to keep in mind the background of the community that is being served and ensure that patients are provided with the requisite information to make informed healthcare decisions.

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References

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2. Institute of Medicine (US) Committee on Health Literacy; Nielsen-Bohman L, Panzer AM, Kindig DA, editors. *Health Literacy: A Prescription to End Confusion.* Washington (DC): National Academies Press (US); 2004. 2. What Is Health Literacy? Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK216035/>