

## NAPCRG 52nd Annual Meeting — Abstracts of Completed Research 2024.

**Submission Id:** 6129

### **Title**

*Advancing Whole Person Care: An Innovative Approach to Integrating Spirituality and Religion into Medical Education*

### **Priority 1 (Research Category)**

Education and training

### **Presenters**

Zuhair Zaidi, Ammaar Kazi, Haafiz Hashim, BS, Ahmed Alshaikhsalama, Zaiba Jetpuri, DO, MBA

### **Abstract**

**Context:** Despite the recognized significance of the integration of spiritual care into healthcare, spiritual training is often an elective rather than a core component of medical education and often lacks robust measures of skill and aptitude.

**Objective:** To transform medical students' education nationwide by developing a novel, measurable and replicable 8-week elective course on understanding the relationship between religion and medicine.

**Study Design:** This longitudinal cohort study used a pre-and-post-course survey to assess the impacts of the "Religion & Medicine" course at UT Southwestern Medical Center, across distinct Spring and Fall 2023 medical cohorts, including a control group.

**Setting:** The course and research was conducted at UT Southwestern Medical Center, ensuring ethical integrity and participant privacy protection.

**Population Studied:** Current medical students at UT Southwestern; Spring 2023 had 8 students, while Fall 2023 included 11 students plus an 11-member control group.

**Intervention:** After an experimental 2023 semester characterized by a focus on didactic lectures, the course transitioned to more interactive class-led discussions in Fall 2023, incorporating guest lectures, case scenarios, and guided discussions to facilitate practical insights into integrating spiritual care.

**Outcome Measures:** Attitudinal shifts were measured using Likert scale surveys, and aptitude was assessed through an innovative new format composed of graded ethical case scenarios. Surveys were administered at the beginning and end of each semester.

Results: In the first semester, survey results showed no significant changes in attitude. Following a radical change in course design to a more interactive approach and a new focus on measurable knowledge changes, the second semester showed notable improvements in student attitudes and aptitude. The second-semester students saw a significant aptitude improvement from 45% before the course to 78% after class (in contrast to the control group of 51%). Attitudinal measures showed significant increases ( $p < .01$ ) in students' understanding of religions, interest in exploring other religions, and ability to engage in ethical discussions.

Conclusions: Our unique collaborative course design demonstrably improved students' aptitude and attitudes toward spiritual care. These results validate the course's impact as well as show the benefits of our goal of incorporating religious and spiritual care into medical education nationwide

Downloaded from the Annals of Family Medicine website at [www.AnnFamMed.org](http://www.AnnFamMed.org). Copyright © 2024 Annals of Family Medicine, Inc. For the private, noncommercial use of one individual user of the Web site. All other rights reserved. Contact [copyrights@aafp.org](mailto:copyrights@aafp.org) for copyright questions and/or permission requests.