Male students rated themselves as having more cross-cultural knowledge and ability than female students, although the results were not statistically significant. Males also rated themselves overall more culturally competent (males, mean = 5.21 [SD 0.59]; females, mean = 5.07 [SD 0.68], p = 0.049). Females rated themselves as more empathetic to cross-cultural attitudes and beliefs than their male counterparts (females, mean = 4.17 [SD 0.59]; males, mean = 3.84 [SD 0.64], p < 0.001). Females rated having knowledge, abilities and awareness of attitudes and beliefs of cross-cultural issues as more important than males (females, mean = 3.25 [SD 0.84], males, mean = 3.38 [SD 0.59], p = 0.019); ability, females, mean = 3.17 [SD 0.79]; males, mean = 2.89 [SD 0.58], p = 0.015); attitudes and beliefs - females, mean = 3.40 [SD 0.99]; males, mean = 3.06 [SD 0.97], p = 0.017).

The findings show that, in general, male students perceive themselves as more culturally competent than females. However, females believed that culturally competent issues were more important. Recent trends are showing that female applicants to medical school has peaked and has declined and this may impact the cultural competency of future physician workforce. A cultural competency curriculum may educate males toward recognizing the importance of culturally diverse patients needs.

This study can be used to better inform medical educators in the design and development of a cross-cultural curriculum and to strengthen an existing cultural competency curriculum in medical education. This study was limited to only a single medical school and the response rate was relatively low (32%) and therefore the results may not be generalizable to other populations. The importance items were scaled differently than traditional Likert responses. They were scaled as follows: 1=Not Very Important, 2 = Important, 3 = Unsure, 4 = Very Important, 5 = Extremely Important. These unordered response categories may have created measurement error. However, of note is the large Cronbach's Alphas of the importance domains which tends to suggest that respondents may have focused on the numerical responses and not the Likert response categories. Also, the length of the questionnaire may have prevented some students from completing the entire questionnaire.

REFERENCES


