

# Clinical medicine training prepares medical students to treat transgender patients

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Medical students who are specifically trained in clinical transgender medicine are better prepared to treat transgender patients, a new study from Boston University School of Medicine suggests. The study results will be presented in a poster Saturday, March 17 at ENDO 2018, the 100th annual meeting of the Endocrine Society in Chicago, Ill.

"The number one barrier to quality transgender medical care is the lack of trained clinicians," study co-authors Jason Andrew Park, a [medical student](#), and Joshua David Safer, M.D., the medical director of the Center for Transgender Medicine and Surgery, said in a joint statement.

"Boston University School of Medicine introduced a clinical elective where students can participate in direct medical care for [transgender patients](#). The students who participated in the elective reported greater confidence in providing care to transgender individuals than the same students had reported from classroom instruction alone," they noted.

To augment the school's mandatory training of medical students in gender identity and transgender medicine, the authors implemented a pilot Transgender Medicine elective that enabled fourth-year [medical students](#) to rotate on services that provided direct transgender-specific clinical care for transgender [patients](#). The 20 students in the program had already taken part in an elective in which they learned methods of providing transgender medical care.

In a survey at the beginning of the pilot elective, all the students

expressed the opinion that medical schools and residency programs need to provide training in transgender health. In a survey after completing the elective, the students reported significantly improved confidence in their ability to provide care to transgender patients. Students rating their comfort as "high" increased from 45 percent (9 students) at baseline to 80 percent (16 students), and those rating their knowledge of the management of transgender patients as "high" rose from zero to 85 percent (17 students).

The percentage of students rating their skills for providing general care to transgender patients as "low" decreased from 35 percent (7 students) at baseline to zero, and the number rating their skills for providing hormone treatment to transgender patients as "low" dropped from 10 students to 1.

"Transgender individuals are medically underserved in the United States and face many documented disparities in care due to providers' lack of education, training, and comfort. Clinical exposure to transgender [medicine](#) during clinical years can contribute to closing the gap between [transgender](#) and LGB care and to improving access to care," the authors wrote in their abstract.

Provided by The Endocrine Society

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