

Abstract

Objective: Maternal mortality disproportionately affects Black people. Implicit biases play a role in how healthcare providers interact with and treat their Black patients. By increasing knowledge about implicit bias, healthcare providers can learn tools and strategies to decrease the effects of their implicit biases on clinical decision making. The purpose of this project was to increase healthcare provider knowledge regarding the effects of racial bias on maternal mortality through the use of an educational intervention.

Methods: A pre-test/post-test educational intervention design was utilized. Healthcare practitioners on a Labor and Delivery unit (nurses, physicians, midwives) voluntarily participated in a one-time, 90-minute educational session about implicit bias. Participants completed online pre-testing, immediate post-testing, and a second post-test at eight weeks post-intervention. Online testing contained questions answered on a Likert scale as well as open-ended qualitative questions.

Results: Twenty-two participants took both the pre-test and initial post-test. The mean pre-test score was 9.05 (SD 4.86, p-value 0.2). Increased knowledge was demonstrated by a lower score. The mean post-test summary score immediately after the educational intervention was 3.18 (SD 2.86, p-value 0.05). On average, participants decreased their scores by 5.86 points (SD 2.93). When a paired t-test was calculated, there was a statistically significant difference in pre and post-test scores as evidenced by a p-value of 0.00. The test statistic was -9.38. The second post-test demonstrated a retention in knowledge eight weeks post-intervention using a Wilcoxon signed-rank test. Qualitative results showed participants found the presentation beneficial to their clinical practice.

Conclusions: Healthcare providers demonstrated increased knowledge related to implicit bias and maternal mortality following a 90-minute educational intervention. Additionally, participants in this project found it useful to them and highly recommended it. Implicit bias education should be offered to all healthcare providers.