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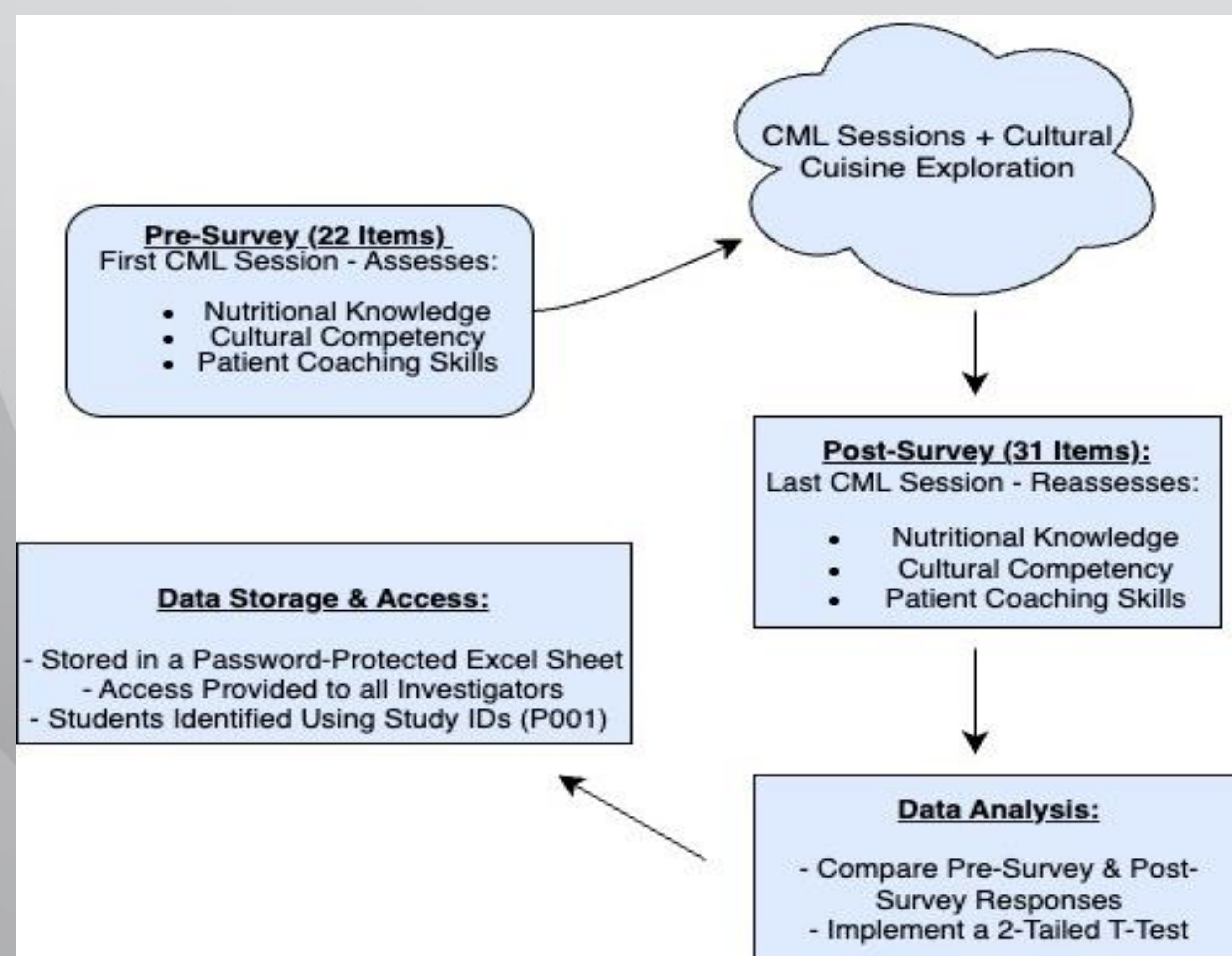
Development and Evaluation of Cultural Competency Curriculum in Culinary Medicine at an Osteopathic Medical School

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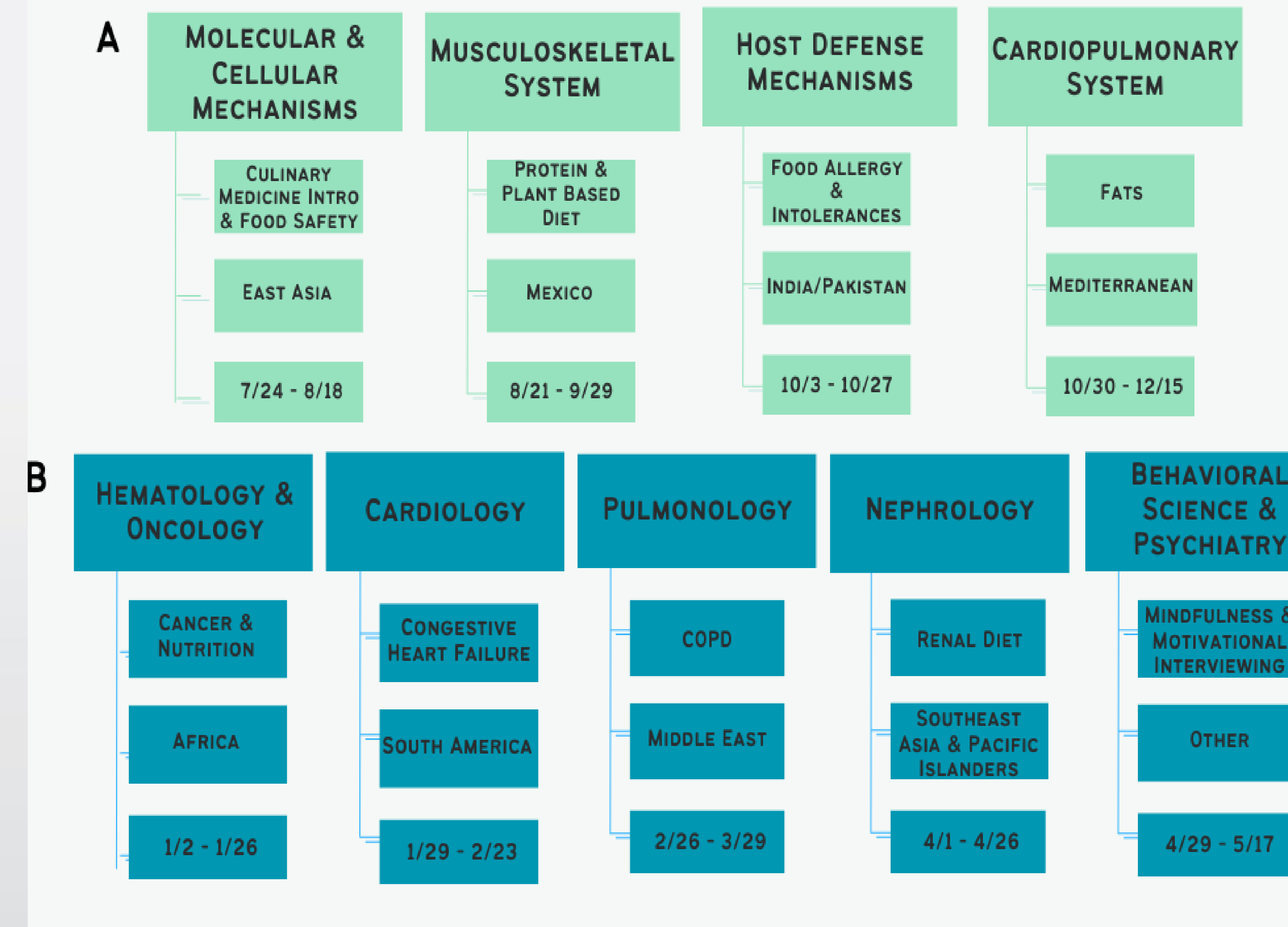
BACKGROUND

- Chronic diseases are the leading cause of death and disability in the U.S.A.¹ with 80% linked to lifestyle factors such as diet and exercise. Despite this, **most medical students graduate with minimal nutrition and lifestyle education.** While cultural competence is a core competency set by the AAMC, many students lack training in racial and ethnic health disparities and diverse diets.²
- Culinary Medicine (CM)** combines food, cooking, and medicine to enhance nutrition counseling³. Integrating CM into medical education has been shown to improve student knowledge and better prepare physicians to support patients in making lasting dietary changes⁴.
- This study aims to educate first- and second-year CHSU-COM students on whole-food, health-focused diets while incorporating cultural competency and coaching skills. **Each module explores a global region's cultural history and the role of food in nutrition and health.**
- We anticipate significant improvements in nutrition knowledge, cooking self-efficacy, and cultural competency upon course completion. This program fills a critical gap in medical training, better preparing students for clinical practice.

METHODS



EXAMPLE CML COURSE LESSONS, OMS-I (A) AND OMS-II (B)



RESULTS

Statistically Significant Improvements:

- Students showed statistically significant gains in both cultural competency and coaching confidence based on Wilcoxon signed-rank tests ($p < 0.05$).

Cultural Competency:

- There was a significant increase in the **ability to discuss personal cultural heritage** ($Z = -2.201, p = .028$), and **how one's culture influences thinking** ($Z = -1.976, p = .048$).
- Reflection on **how culture affects beliefs and behaviors significantly improved** ($Z = -2.737, p = .006$).
- Students **showed greater ability to discuss nutrition evaluation from a cultural/ethnic/racial perspective** ($Z = -2.346, p = .019$).

Coaching Confidence / Patient Education:

- There was a significant improvement in **students' ability to change their behaviors for better outcomes in diverse practice settings** ($Z = -3.117, p = .002$).
- Students reported **increased confidence in evaluating individuals from different cultural backgrounds** ($Z = -2.543, p = .011$).

Descriptive Post-Survey Outcomes:

- A high proportion of students **"agreed" or "strongly agreed" that their knowledge of health issues in diverse populations** ($M = 4.61$), **ability to communicate nutrition across cultures** ($M = 4.43$), and **awareness of food culture** ($M = 4.32$) improved.
- Students rated highly their **exposure to multiple cultures through CML** ($M = 4.13-4.70$ across course-specific items).

CONCLUSION

- This study demonstrates that integrating cultural competency into Culinary Medicine (CM) education **significantly improves medical students' understanding of diverse cultural influences** on nutrition and enhances their ability to communicate effectively across cultures.
- The observed gains in cultural awareness, coaching confidence, and practical application of culturally relevant dietary knowledge highlight the **value of CM as a tool for fostering inclusive, patient-centered care.** By understanding and respecting the foods, traditions, and preferences that shape patient's dietary habits, **physicians can foster a more personalized approach to nutrition counseling.**
- To improve health outcomes, medical education must move **beyond a one-size-fits-all model**, equipping future physicians with both clinical knowledge and cultural sensitivity. This study underscores the **importance of culturally informed nutrition counseling** in empowering patients to make meaningful, lasting dietary changes.

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