Podcast Development to Train Genetic Counseling Clinical Supervisors: A Pilot Study

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BACKGROUND

- All genetic counseling programs require varying amounts of supervised patient interactions for students
- Despite consensus research showing efficacy of supervision, development of a **standardized training** for genetic counseling supervisors does not exist
- Barriers to adequate training include **limited time and budget** due to the rapidly expanding genetic counseling field and prioritization of other issues within a program
- Clinical supervisors report workshops with **discussion** as most effective for training
- Development of a podcast for training clinical genetic counseling supervisors has potential to solve the above issues

OBJECTIVES

1. Develop a new, unique podcast specifically designed to train clinical supervisors in the genetic counseling profession

2. Study a podcast's ability to increase self-efficacy scores across multiple domains and skills required for effective supervision

3. Identify remaining obstacles for supervision training through facilitated discussion

METHODS

Podcast Development

- 4 episodes recorded with Dr. MacFarlane, ~25 minutes long
- Topics included: anxiety, goal setting, supervisory working alliance (SWA) and feedback

Survey Development

- Generated pre- and post-podcast surveys based on topics and information from episodes
  - Domain ex: "I feel I am able to address a student's anxiety as a supervisor."
  - Skill ex: "I can effectively respond to students' anxieties regarding performance evaluations"
- Included questions regarding demographics, familiarity with podcasts, experience with supervision

Participant Recruitment

- Elicited participation through Arcadia supervisors and Integrated Genetics GC network → 8 supervisors

Study Execution

- Provided survey before listening to podcasts
- Participants listened to podcasts individually then participated in 45-minute discussion session in groups of 4 on Zoom
- Post-session survey was distributed and completed

Data Analysis

- Analyzed quantitative change in confidence to perform various skills deemed essential to clinical supervisors through self efficacy ratings
- Studied recorded transcripts of discussion sessions for recurrent themes
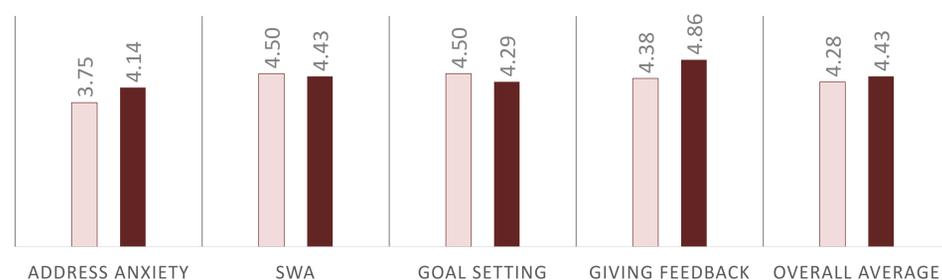
RESULTS

Demographics

	Number (% of participants)
Gender	
Male	2 (25%)
Female	6 (75%)
Specialty	
Prenatal	2 (25%)
Cancer	2 (25%)
Pediatrics	1 (12.5%)
Mitochondrial	2 (25%)
Adult	1 (12.5%)
Average Age of Participants	28.25 years (range 26 – 32)
Average years as a GC	3.5 years (range 1 – 8.5)
Average years as a Supervisor	3.25 years (range 0.5 – 8)
Average students/year	3 students (range 1 – 5)

Survey Responses
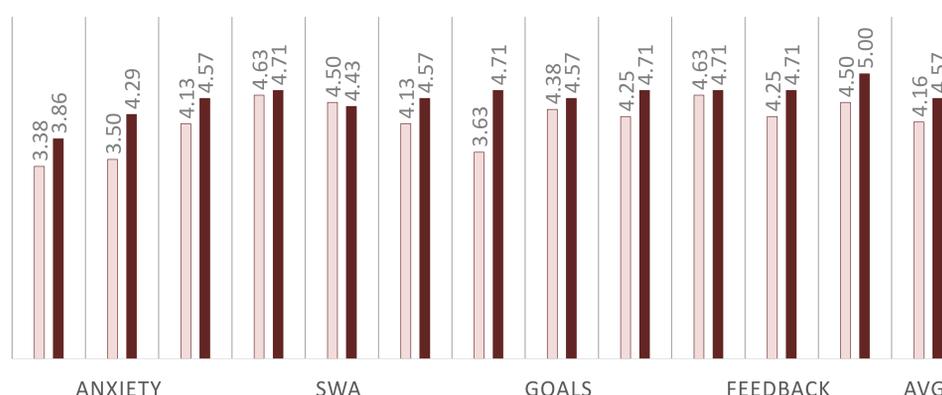
MAIN DOMAIN EFFICACY RATINGS
(MAX SCORE OF 5; N=8)
PRETEST / POSTTEST

	ADDRESS ANXIETY	SWA	GOAL SETTING	GIVING FEEDBACK	OVERALL AVERAGE
PRETEST	3.75	4.50	4.50	4.38	4.28
POSTTEST	4.14	4.43	4.29	4.86	4.43

SPECIFIC SKILL EFFICACY RATINGS
(MAX SCORE OF 5, 3 SKILLS/DOMAIN; N=7)
PRETEST / POSTTEST

	ANXIETY			SWA			GOALS			FEEDBACK			AVG.
PRETEST	3.38	3.50	4.13	4.63	4.50	4.13	3.63	4.38	4.25	4.63	4.25	4.50	4.16
POSTTEST	3.86	4.29	4.57	4.71	4.43	4.57	4.71	4.57	4.71	4.71	4.71	5.00	4.57

Thoughts on Podcasts (elicited from surveys):

"A set of podcasts like the ones for this study could be helpful for supervisors at all experiences ranges."

"Would love to hear more personalized stories, student testimonials, experiences from supervisors who have been very successful with students and more about their experiences."

"I feel like these podcasts were good [at] providing theory but I would like more specifics. What are some strategies I can use as a supervisor to pinpoint skill-sets my students need to work on?"

"The GC community is growing with many new young students entering which should reduce issues such as technological barriers. Cons may include that podcasts cannot be immediately interactive, so if someone has questions, they may not have an easy way to get answers or clarifications."

DISCUSSION

- Initial data indicates podcasts may be a helpful tool for:
  - **Continuing education** resource
  - **Development of skills** for clinical genetic counseling supervisors
- Demographics of participants reflected that of the field of genetic counseling with variety of expertise
  - Most had **little to no prior experience supervising** – may explain desire to participate and increase in scores
- Preliminary analysis determined the combination of listening to podcasts along with group discussion increased counselor confidence in skills assessed
  - Changes in quantitative **scores increased** modestly – may be due to only using a 5-point Likert scale and high confidence scores pre-test
  - Recognition of new strategies may translate to decreased scores of confidence, but learning still occurred
- Participants **ultimately gained confidence** to take on a student if asked – 88.25% would accept before the study → 91.27% after

Limitations

- Small sample size and limited demographic → unable to generalize results to entire field of genetic counseling
- Cannot determine which strategy was more impactful, the podcasts or the discussion
- Study assesses participant confidence in each skill, not necessarily competence

Practice Implications/Future Directions

- Increased confidence indicates potential of podcasts for comprehensive, standardized training for genetic counseling clinical supervisors
- Future studies will:
  - Develop additional episodes of podcast
  - Recruit additional supervisors
  - Encourage podcast training in other specialties

QUESTIONS?

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