

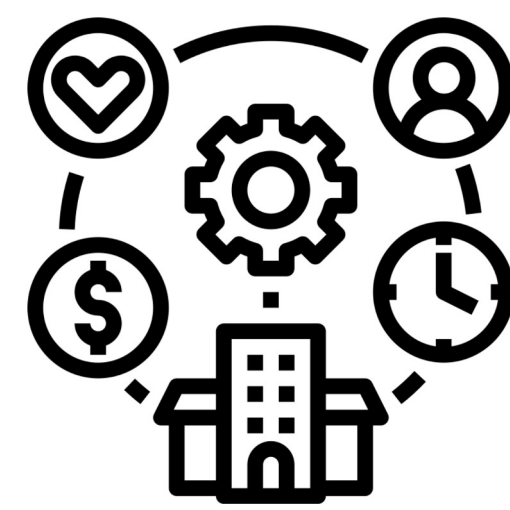
BACKGROUND

- Spine surgery and the recovery process is both physically and mentally taxing for patients.¹⁻²
- Sociodemographic disparities in spine surgery access and outcomes show that low-income, older, and non-White patients generally fare worse.³⁻⁶
- Patient navigator programs have demonstrated value in improving patient quality of life and reducing patient distress in other disease processes.⁷⁻⁹
- **In order to address these disparities in care and better support patients undergoing spine surgery at Duke, we developed an innovative Spine Surgery Patient Navigators program.**

PROGRAM GOALS

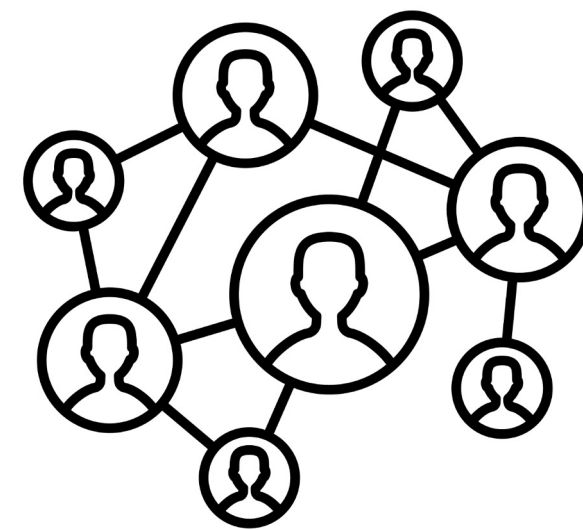
Aim 1: Enhance Healthcare Access and Resource Utilization

Patient navigators serve as liaisons between the provider and patient, addressing any questions and connecting patients to relevant resources.



Aim 2: Expand Patients' Social Support Networks

Patient navigators spend time connecting with patients in the hospital and continue to check-in on their overall wellbeing via post-operative phone calls.

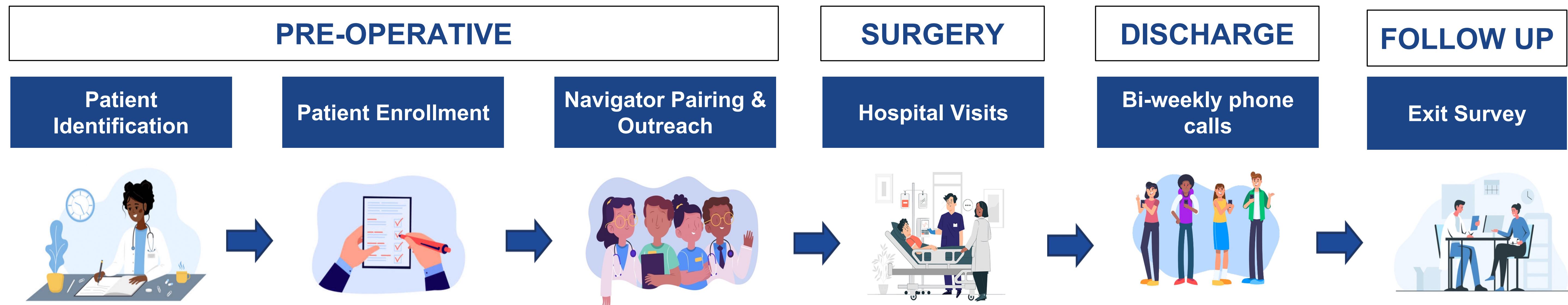


Aim 3: Improve Postoperative Mobility and Physical Status

Patient navigators demonstrate mobility exercises, explain their importance, and confirm patient progress with the physical therapy team.



PROGRAM INTERVENTION



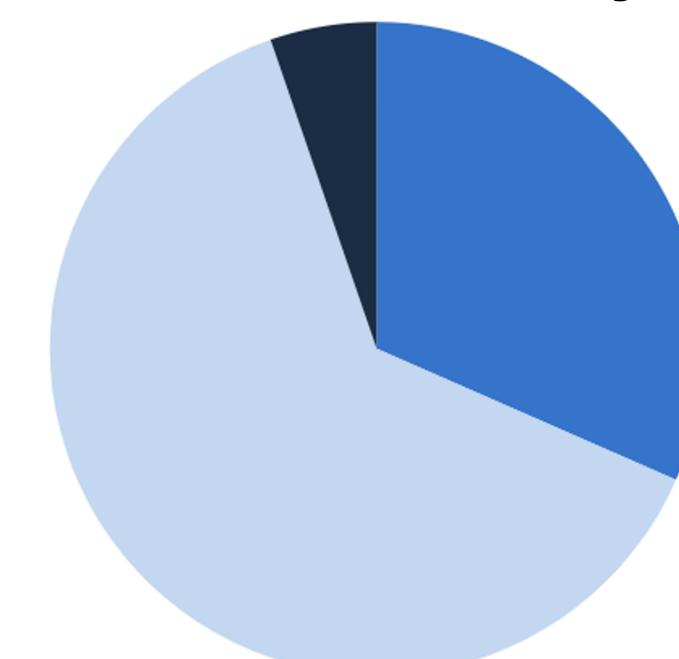
PARTICIPANTS

19 Patients Enrolled

- Mean age was 65 years \pm 5.9
- 63.2% (n=12) identified as male and 63.2% (n=12) identified as White
- Most patients were married (57.9%, n=19)

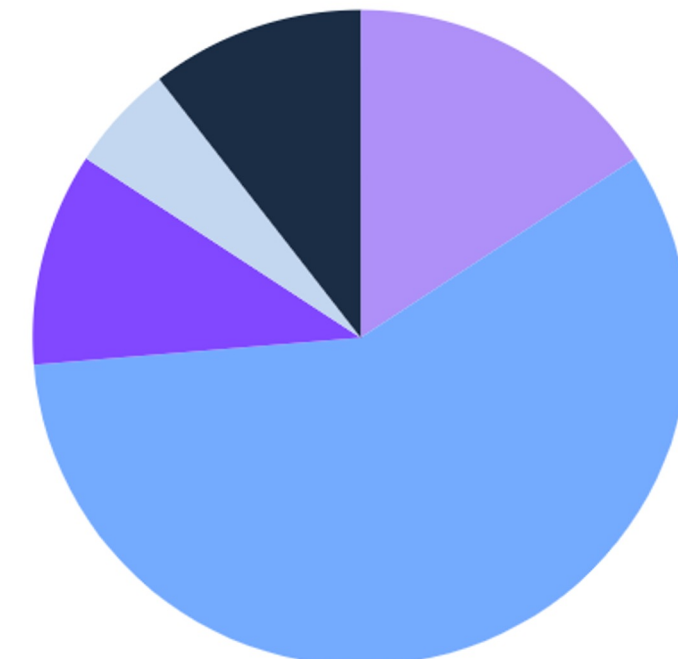


Racial Identity



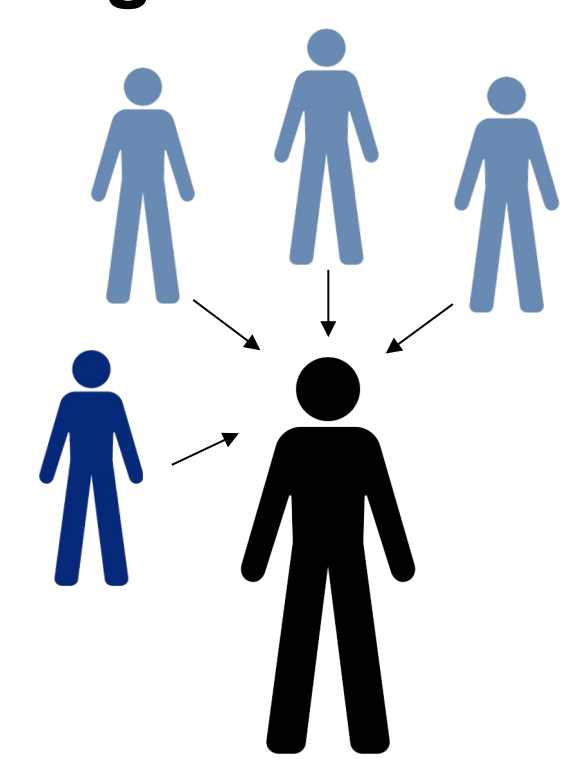
Black or African American
White Asian

Marital Status



Divorced/Separated Married
Never been married
Widowed Living with a partner

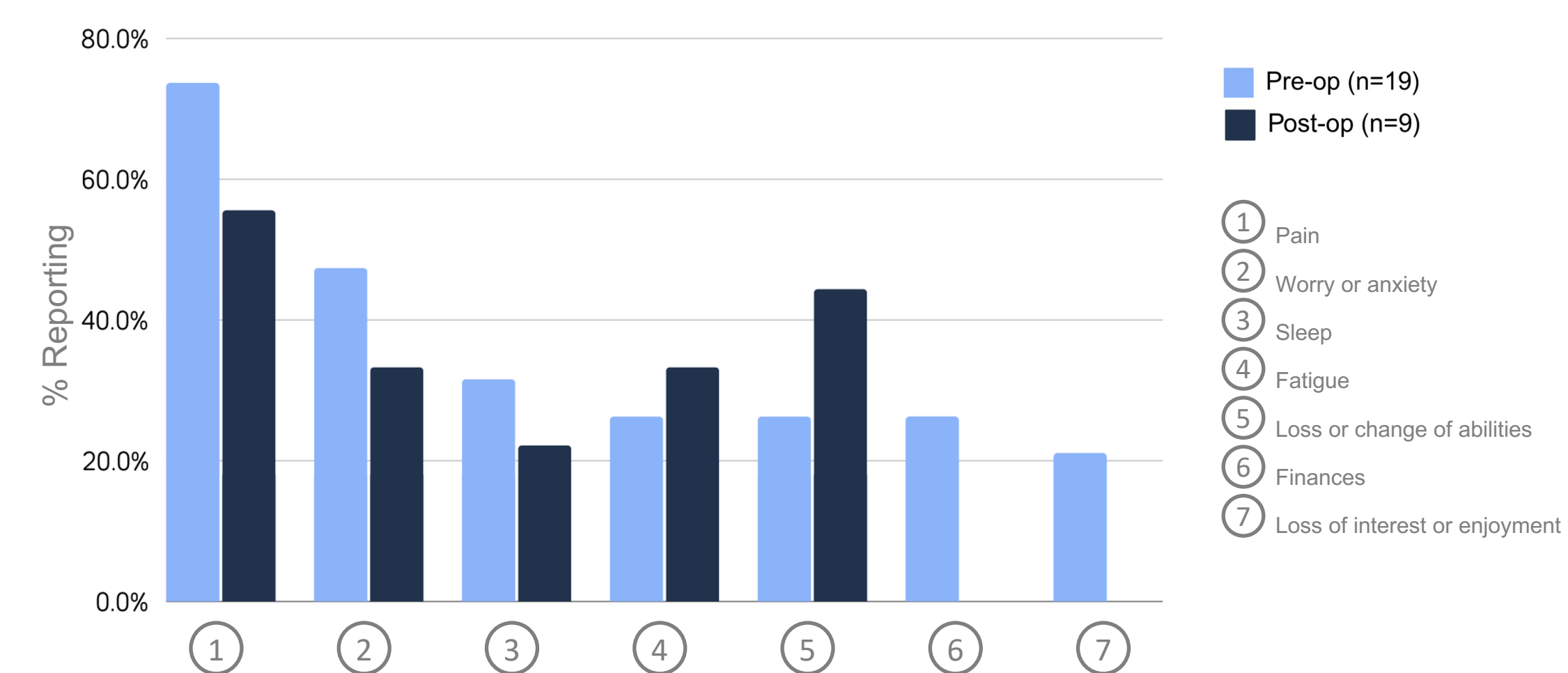
Program Model



Patients are paired with a navigation team that includes 3 undergraduates + 1 medical student

PRELIMINARY RESULTS

Figure 1: Patient Perioperative Concerns



Almost half of patients reported their navigators helped them **feel more confident using MyChart.**



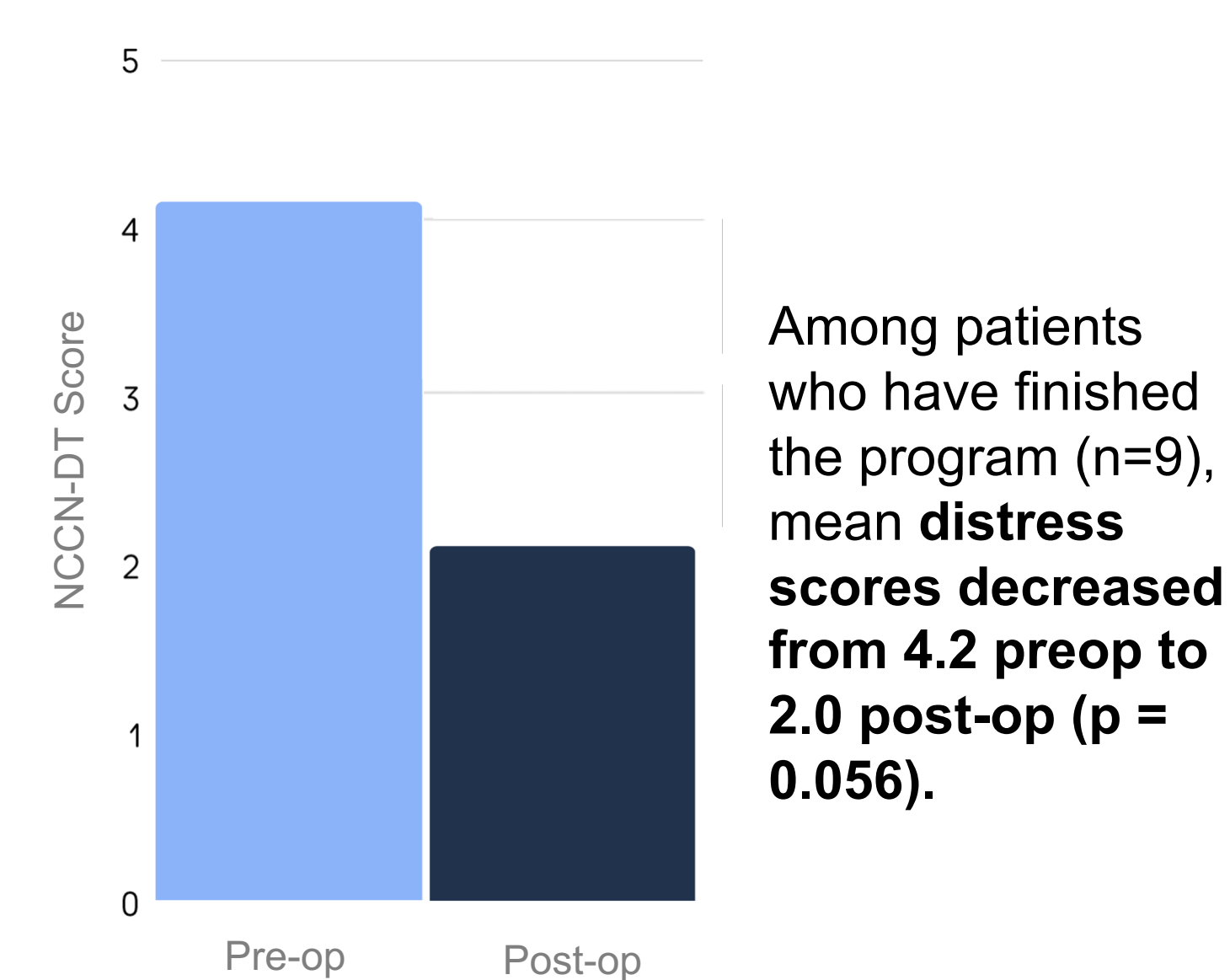
Two-thirds of patients felt their navigator team **improved their experience with back surgery.**



Nearly all patients said they would **recommend the program to a friend undergoing back surgery.**



Figure 2: Perioperative Distress Scores



TAKEAWAYS

1. Our patient navigator program proves effective in supporting patients throughout the peri-operative period.
2. Pre-operative anxiety is common among patients \rightarrow navigators play a crucial role in alleviating this distress.
3. Navigators can connect patients to healthcare resources.
4. The inclusion of students in navigator teams fosters mutual benefits for both patients and navigators.

Program Innovation

- 19 patients** participated in the program, receiving individualized support and navigation.
- 9 undergraduate students** gained experience interacting with and supporting patients as a part of a clinical team.
- 3 medical students** honed their clinical and communication skills and gained experience leading a team.

