

BACKGROUND

- Stigma surrounding substance use disorders (SUDs) is common among healthcare professionals and negatively impacts quality of care.
- Stigma exists early in the training pipeline— training health professional students to recognize and address SUD stigma is needed to reduce disparities in care.
- Educational interventions to address stigma among medical residents have been shown to improve attitudes towards SUD, but similar interventions have yet to be developed for medical students.
- We developed a half-day required stigma teaching session for first-year medical students that was launched in May 2022 (see *Figure 1*).

OBJECTIVE

- To evaluate the impact of a novel stigma teaching session on medical students' knowledge, skills, and attitudes towards people with SUDs.

METHODS

- Pre/post study design: We invited all students to complete an anonymous, online questionnaire before and immediately after the teaching session (see below for *Figure 2: Evaluation Instrument*).
- Analysis was limited to matched pre-post responses.

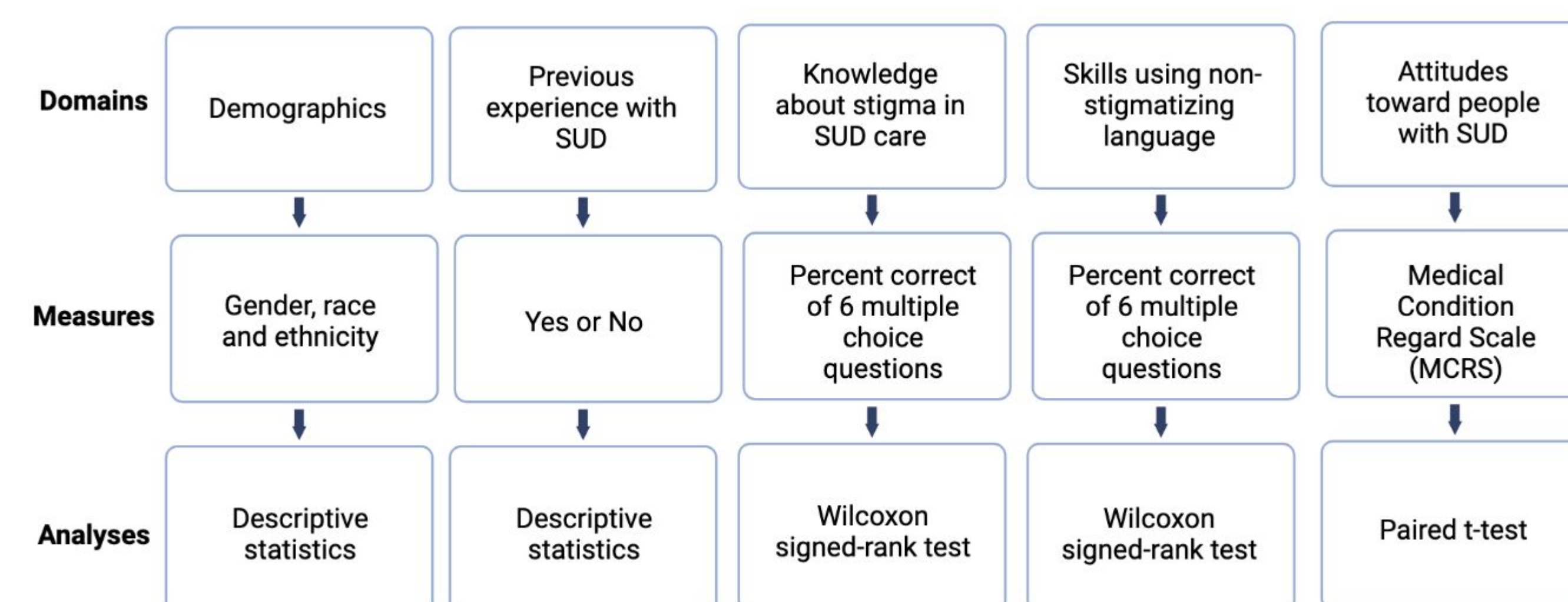


Figure 2: Evaluation Instruments

After participating in a novel stigma teaching session, first-year medical students significantly improved their knowledge of and attitudes towards patients with SUDs

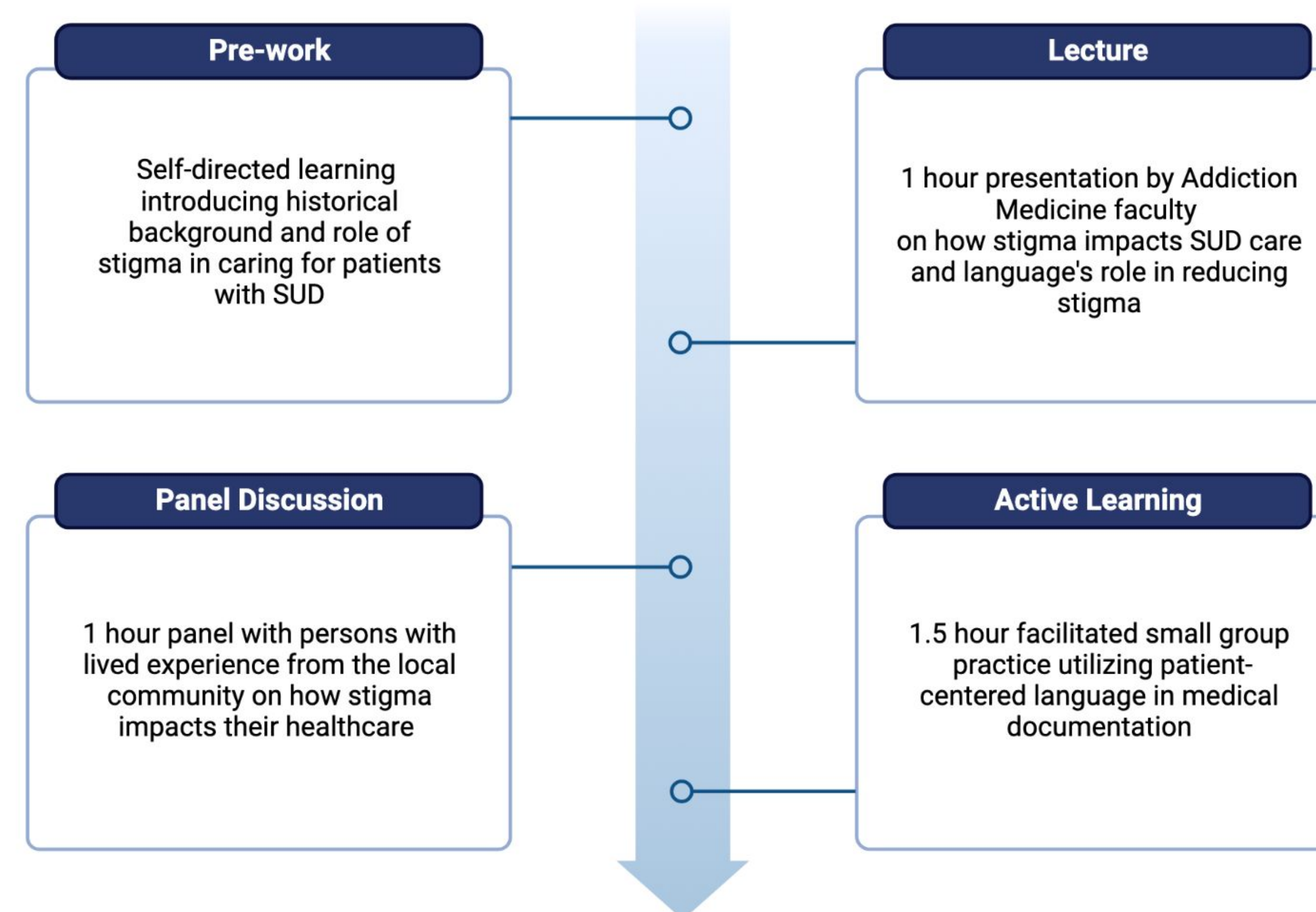


Figure 1: Structure of the stigma teaching session

RESULTS

- 97 students completed pre-/post- questionnaires (53% matched pairs response rate). Students were mostly female (69%), white (52%) and non-Hispanic (83%).
- Over half (53%) reported previous study, work, volunteer, or personal experience with SUDs.

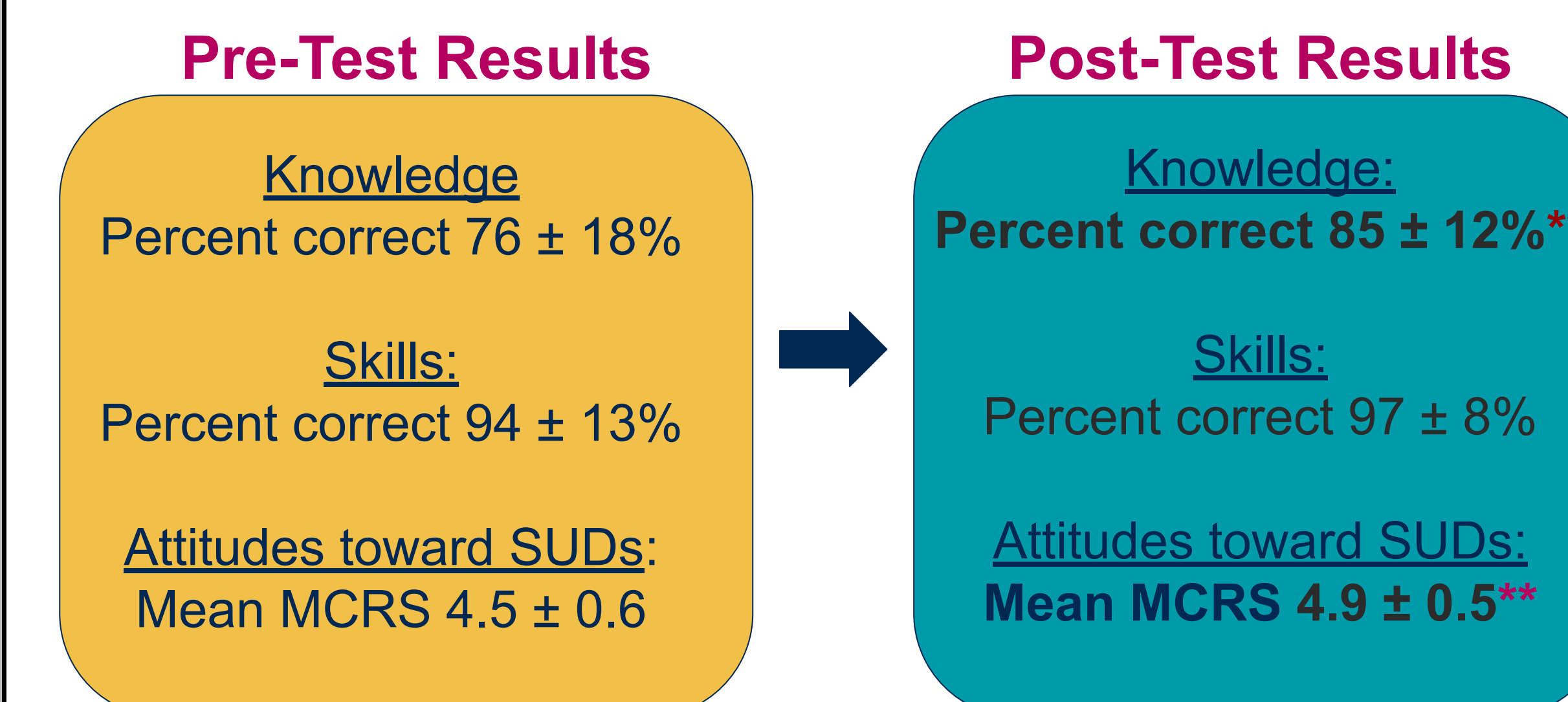


Figure 3: Pre/Post Result Comparisons by Domain
**Significant difference with $p < 0.01$

Comparison by Previous Experience with SUDs:

- Percent correct in knowledge and skills domains did not differ ($p = 0.25$ and $p = 0.90$, respectively).
- Mean MCRS score was higher among students with previous experience ($p < 0.01$).

DISCUSSION

- Participation in a novel half-day stigma teaching session was effective in improving medical students' knowledge of and attitudes toward patients with SUDs.
- Skills using non-stigmatizing language did not change significantly post-teaching; however, scores in the skills domains were high at baseline.
- Study findings are limited to a single, large, urban medical school with a high percentage of students with previous experience with SUDs and may not be generalizable to other health professional schools.
- Future work should include other health professional students with variable previous experience w SUDs, and measure the long-term effects of stigma teaching on knowledge, skills, and attitudes toward SUD.

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