



Comparing The Concerns And Perceptions Of Preclinical And Clinical Medical Students About Surgery Clerkship

Mohammad Omar Al Refai; Khadijah Zaidan; Hajir Saeed; Mohammed Ali Al-Musawi; Mariam Almuqem; Zahra Sajwani

INTRODUCTION

Medical students' transition from the preclinical to the clinical phase is a well-established cause of stress and anxiety¹. Surgery clerkship provokes more anxiety and stress as students anticipate the use of surgical tools, exposure to blood and wounds, and standing for long periods of time². The study aims to determine a correlation between the apprehensions of preclinical students and the experiences of clinical students after their surgery clerkship. We also compared the interests and preferences of preclinical and clinical students.

METHODOLOGY

Most students were asked to fill a paper-based questionnaire, and some were approached using an identical online questionnaire. Concerns and interests of preclinical students were compared to the expectations of clinical students.

Design
Comparative Cross-sectional

Participants
N of invitees= 360; N of response= 340; RR= 94.4%
Clinical N= 121
Pre-clinical N= 219

Time Frame
February till June 2020

Preclinical Concerns
Which of the following are you concerned of experiencing during your surgery rotation?
Not at all concerned, Slightly concerned, Somewhat concerned, Moderately concerned, Extremely concerned

Preclinical Interests
Which of the following are you interested in knowing during your surgery rotation?
Not at all interested, Slightly interested, Somewhat interested, Moderately interested, Extremely interested

Clinical Concerns
How frequent have you experienced the following during your surgery rotation?
Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always

Clinical Interests
How satisfied are you from the level of knowledge you received during your surgery rotation regarding the following aspects?
Very dissatisfied, Dissatisfied, Unsure, Satisfied, Very satisfied

RESULTS

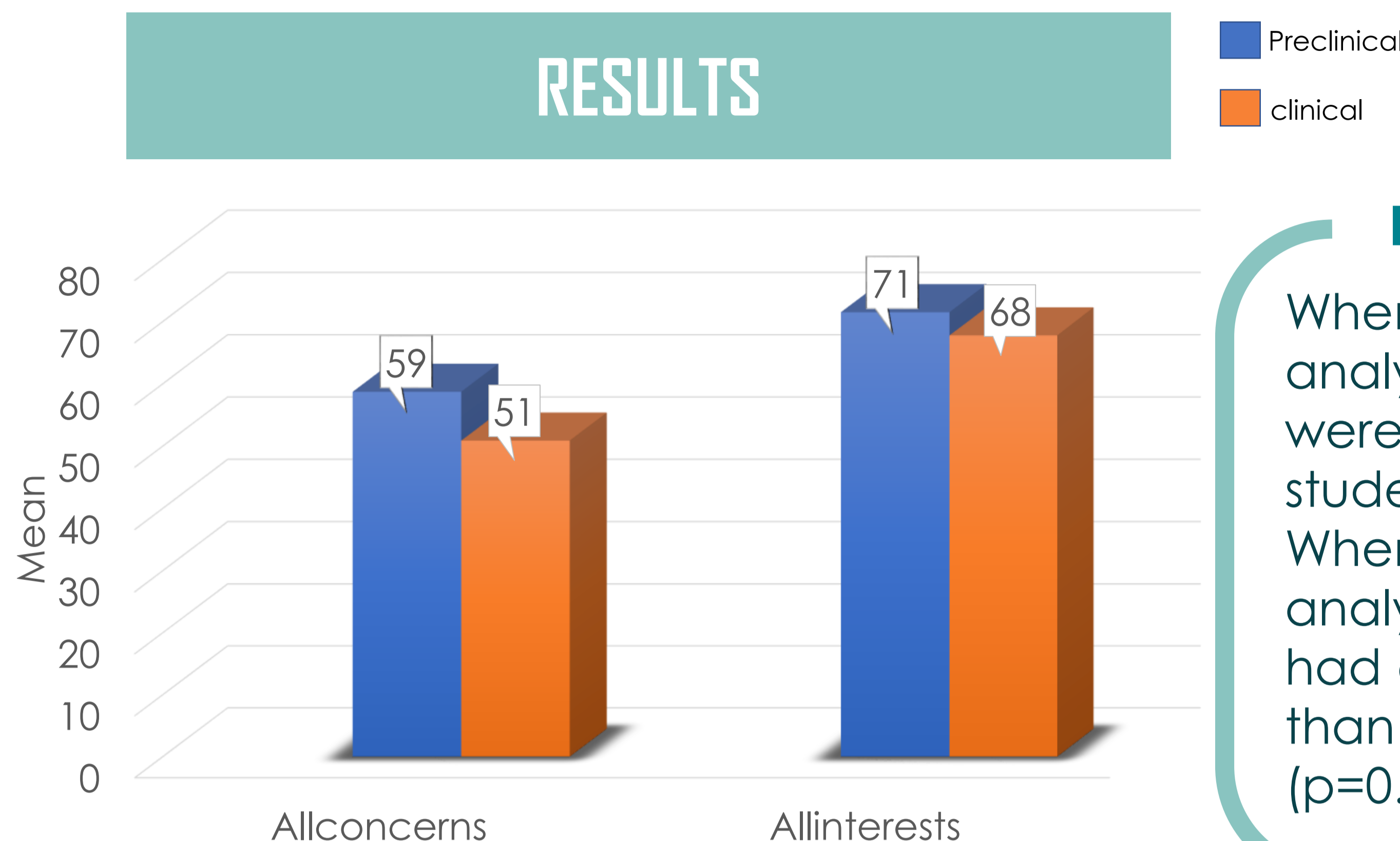


Figure 1

Figure 1

When concerns were collectively analyzed, the preclinical students were more concerned than clinical students' experience ($p < 0.001$). When interests were collectively analyzed, the preclinical students had a higher knowledge expectation than clinical students' experience ($p = 0.009$).

Figure 2

The preclinical students showed a significantly higher concern in all themes except for "Stamina and physical wellbeing", where clinical students' concerns were significantly higher.

Thematic Analysis of Concerns

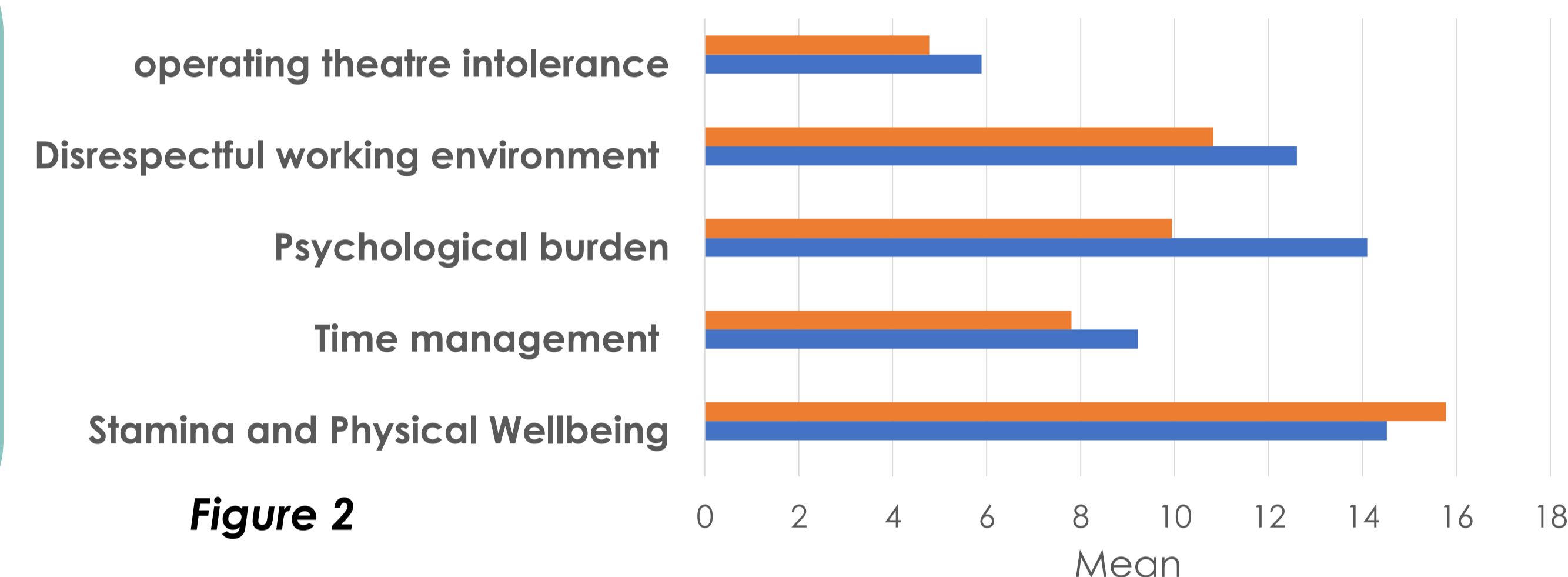


Figure 2

Figure 3

Preclinical students showed a significant higher interest in all themes except for "social skills" ($p > 0.594$).

Thematic Analysis of knowledge expectations

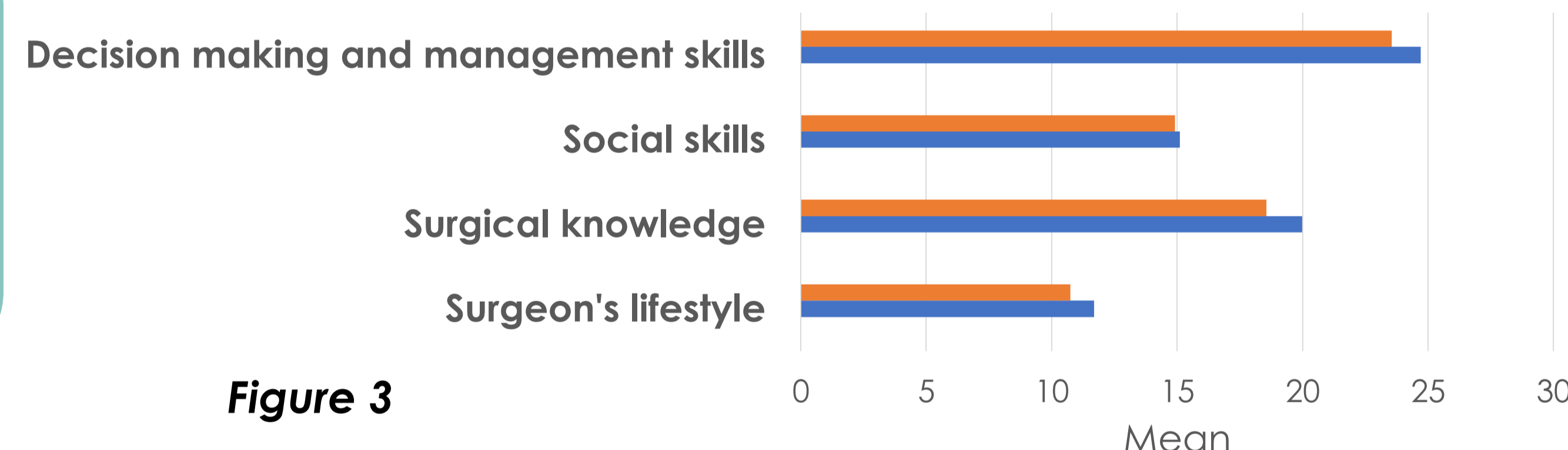


Figure 3

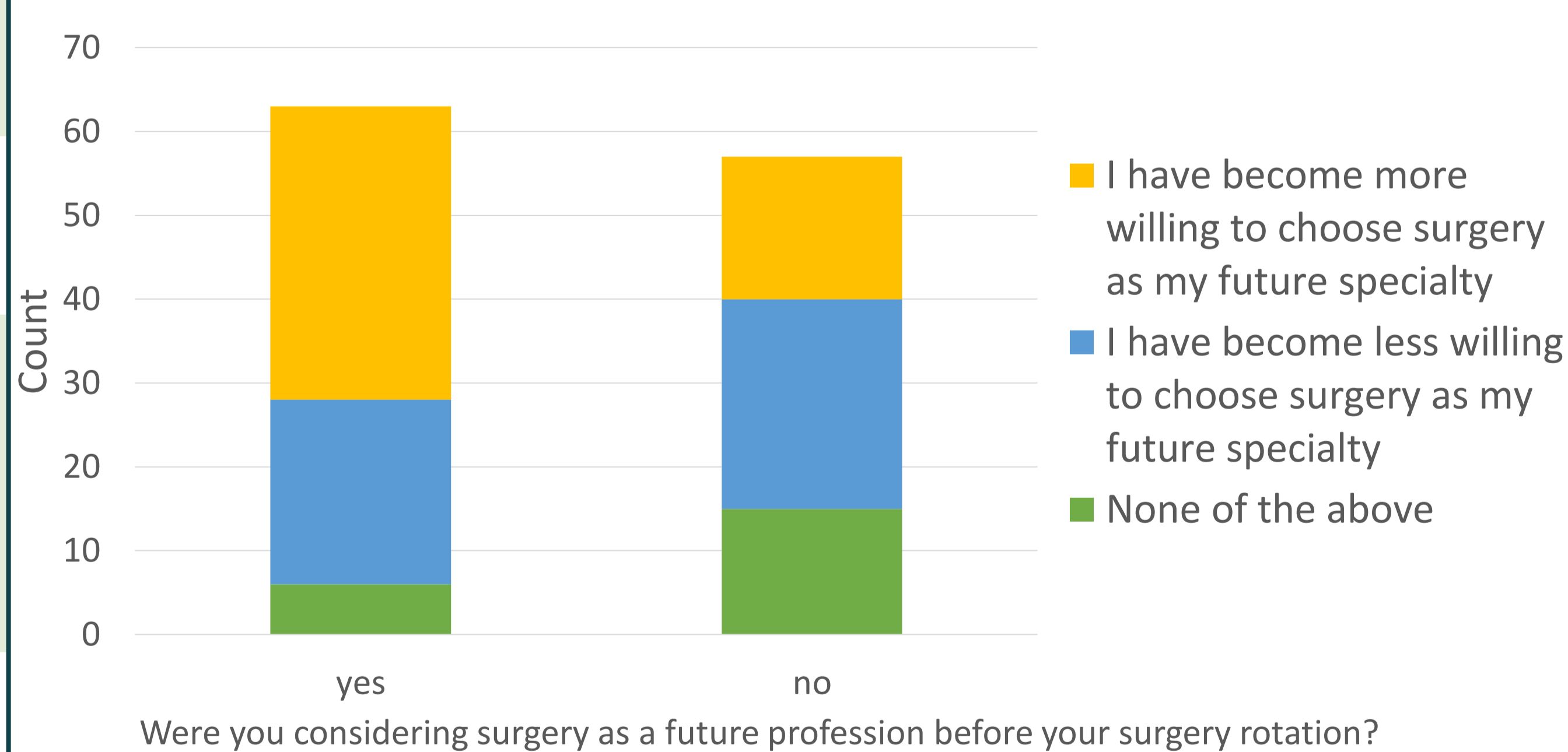


Figure 4

Figure 4

Clinical students who were considering surgery as a future profession were more willing to pursue the discipline even after the rotation, while the clinical students who were not considering surgery as a future profession became less willing after the rotation.

DISCUSSION

Limitations:

Clinical students should have been asked for the hospitals they were assigned in, as the experience may vary. Moreover, more clinical students should be included in the study to make the two groups more comparable.

Conclusions:

Overall, our study showed that the concerns and knowledge expectations of the preclinical students are over exaggerated in comparison to the experience of the clinical students, except for "Stamina and physical wellbeing" where clinical students were significantly higher. Preclinical population should be provided with accurate perception about the future surgery clerkship.