

Project Description

As Schweitzer Fellows, we offered health literacy classes, home visits, and transitional services to immigrants and refugees in order to familiarize them with the health care system in the U.S. and to empower them to make educated health care decisions.

Health Literacy Classes

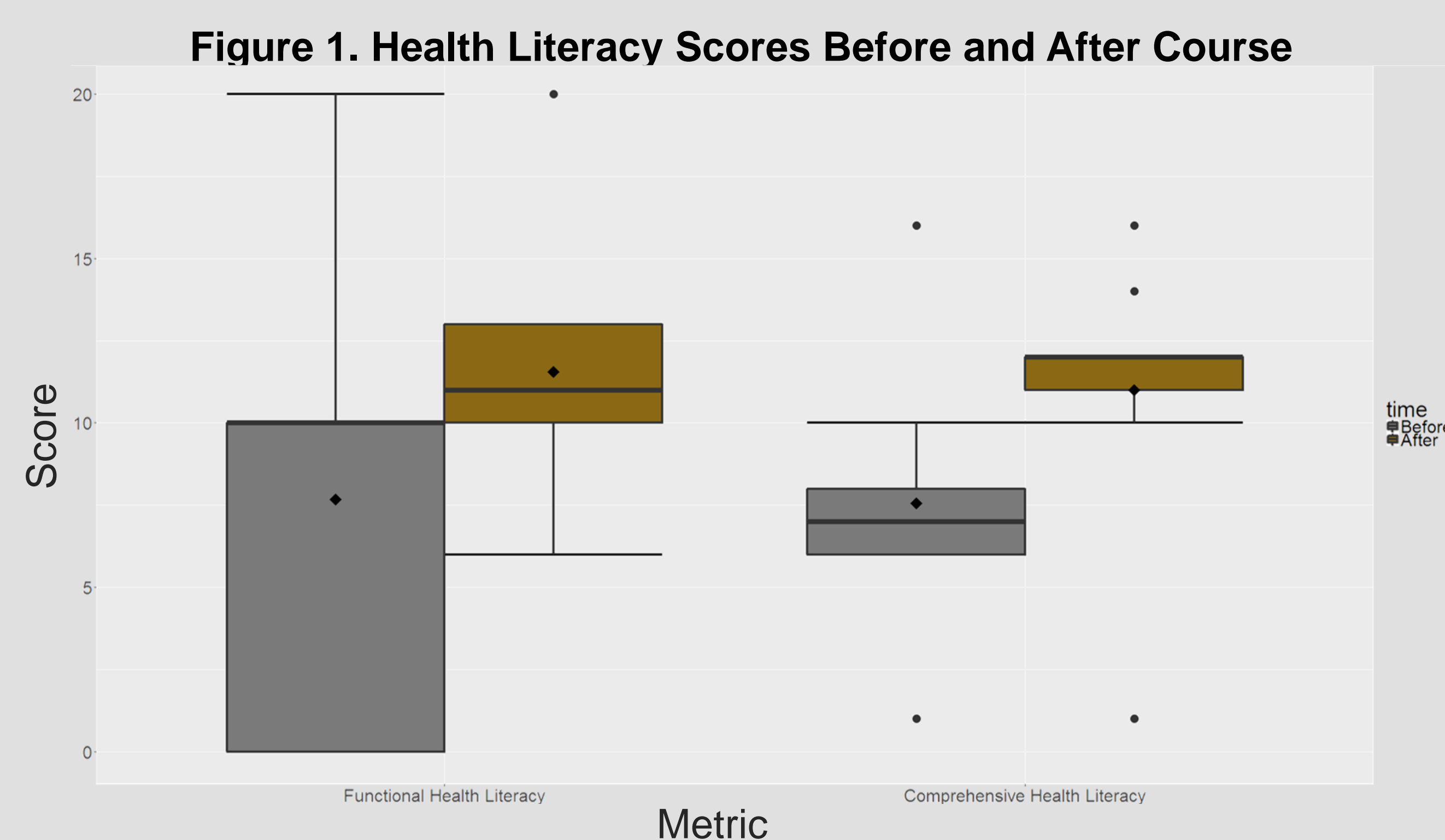
- Six one-hour long, discussion-based classes were offered:
 - Defining health
 - Accessing health services
 - Prescription and non-prescription medication
 - Health Insurance
 - Mental health
 - Specialists
- The classes were offered at community sites, with adult immigrant and refugee clients recruited through community programming.
- Participants shared their experiences with one another and were given the opportunity to ask questions about the health care system in the U.S.
- Functional health literacy (FHL) and comprehensive health literacy (CHL) scores were collected at the start and end of the series of six classes.

Home Visits

- Two English as a second language (ESL) families with complex medical needs were identified by providers.
- Home visits with the families focused on helping overcome health access barriers, including insurance and appointment making, with focus on building patient autonomy.

Transitional Services

- Students United for Immigrant Transitional Services (SUITS) is a clinic that was established by Albert Schweitzer Fellow for Life William Bradford.
- The SUITS clinic offers physical examinations to immigrants and refugees eligible for citizenship, but medically unable to complete the English and Civics portion of the naturalization exam.
- By partnering with the Humanitarian Immigration Law Clinic at Elon University and with World Relief, medical documentation may grant our clients a disability exemption and allow them to become naturalized.



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Outcomes

- 26 total clients participated in the health literacy classes, with 9 clients completing all six classes. For the 9 participants who completed all classes, mean FHL increased from 7.67 to 11.56 ($p=0.078$) and mean CHL increased from 7.56 to 11.00 ($p=0.021$; Figure 1).
- Home visits were consistently offered to two families with complex medical needs. These two families are now able to schedule appointments, arrange their own transportation, and make informed decisions regarding their medical care.
- 19 SUITS clients were eligible for an N-648 and are currently filing applications for citizenship.

Sustainability Plan

- Health literacy classes are currently being run by a rising second year medical student. Course content will be shared at the 2018 North American Society of Refugee Healthcare Providers conference.
- Home visits will continue to be offered. The Global Health Program Director has agreed to direct incoming students towards our project. We are scheduling meetings with administrators to explore how our medical school may incorporate home visits into medical education.
- We are continuing to direct the SUITS clinic. We anticipate incorporating the clinic into the existing student-run clinic at our institution.

Acknowledgements

We would also like to acknowledge Josefin Wångdahl, who shared with us the health literacy scales used in this study built during her own work on migrant health through Uppsala University.