

## The Value of Limited First-Trimester Sonography Training in a Physician Assistant Program

Jessica Bradford,\* Annie Dang,\* Jamie Fritsch,\* Colby Newkirk,\* Jessica Onken,\* Van Van\*

Faculty: Gina Brown

*Department of Physician Assistant, College of Health Professions*

Ultrasound and its uses at the patient bedside are constantly expanding. Despite the increased use of Point of Care Ultrasound (POCUS), few non-physician graduate medical programs, such as physician assistant (PA) programs, have a curriculum for basic ultrasonography. These programs usually limit their training to screening for internal bleeding after trauma. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the feasibility of the integration of POCUS that goes beyond trauma cases, as a condensed curriculum in a PA program, such as WSU. Nine PA students completed one or two three-hour training sessions that centered around key concepts of limited obstetrical, first trimester, ultrasonography such as identifying intrauterine versus ectopic pregnancy, identifying female reproductive organs, and recognizing “normal” versus “abnormal” findings. Students were required to complete a pre-training and post-training questionnaire to evaluate their change in knowledge. After training, most students felt that their understanding of first trimester ultrasound increased, especially in relation to preparing patients for procedures. The first training resulted in the biggest increase of confidence and knowledge, but the second training continued to show an increase, so appeared valuable. Though the small sample size limits its application, our study shows that even a one-time session improves the PA student’s knowledge, understanding, and confidence in basic POCUS for first trimester pregnancies, and would therefore be reasonable to incorporate into a PA program curriculum.