



## Background

In 2020, the National Multiple Sclerosis Society (Society) shifted its Medical Student Mentorship (MSM) program from a four-week in-person shadowing experience to a two-week virtual education program. The aim of the 11-year-old MSM program is to expose medical students, most in their first year of medical school, to the field of neurology and to a comprehensive MS care model. The Society felt it critical to maintain this program, despite the pandemic, to address the significant shortage of neurologists in the United States and in the neurology pipeline.



## VIRTUAL MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS CLINICAL MENTORSHIP PROGRAM FOR MEDICAL STUDENTS

The National MS Society offers a two-week virtual clinical mentorship program to students who have completed at least one year of medical school. The experience will expose students to the diagnosis and comprehensive management of MS under the tutelage of MS experts. (Deadline to apply is March 1, 2021)



**VIRTUAL MENTORSHIP SITES FOR JUNE 2021**

Boston, MA	Denver, CO	New Orleans, LA	Tampa, FL
Cleveland, OH	Durham, NC	New York, NY	
Dallas, TX	Nashville, TN	Philadelphia, PA	

To apply, visit [nationalMSSociety.org/mentorship](https://nationalMSSociety.org/mentorship)

## Objectives

As with the in-person MSM program, the goals of the Virtual MSM program were to raise awareness of the challenges experienced by people with MS and to generate interest in a career in neurology/MS care. Students met virtually with clinicians specializing in MS (neurologists, physiatrists, nurses, rehab therapists and mental health professionals) to learn about and virtually observe the aspects of MS care.

## Methods

The Virtual MSM program brought together 38 medical students for two weeks during the summers of 2020 and 2021. Students participated in a virtual didactic series covering MS pathophysiology, disease and symptom management, rehabilitation strategies, current and past MS research, and racial and implicit bias. Students were provided an in-depth look into the life of an MS neurologist through interviews and one-on-one virtual meetings with a neurologist mentor. Students were invited to join virtual small-group discussions with people with MS to learn from the patient perspective. Virtual peer engagement opportunities were included throughout the program to allow the students to interact, share their mentor experiences and discuss their growing interest in neurology. Students were asked to complete a pre and post self-assessment using a rating scale of their knowledge of MS and MS care, with 1 being no knowledge and 10 being extremely well informed.

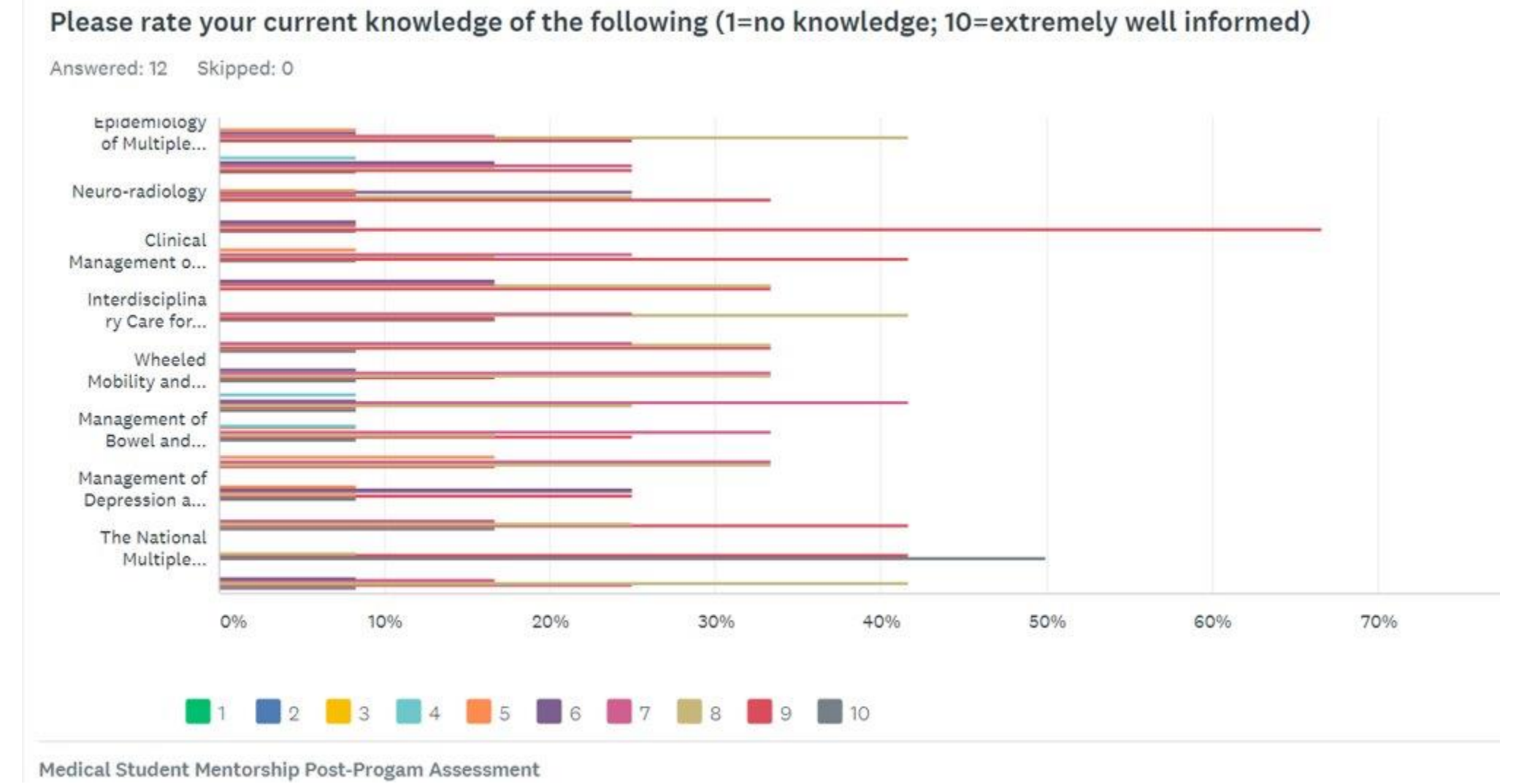
If you could summarize your experience in the Medical Student Mentorship program in one word, what would that word be?



## Results

All students completed the pre assessment and 63% completed the post assessment. Of those who responded to the post assessment, a significant proportion rated themselves an 8 or higher in multiple knowledge categories, including knowledge of Society resources (100%), clinical characteristics of MS (88%), interdisciplinary care for MS (83%), impact of MS on the family (79%) and current research in MS (75%). Compared to the pre assessment, student overall ratings of their knowledge and understanding of MS increased in the post assessment an average of 4 points. Over 87% of participants indicated they were very much inclined to select neurology as a career specialty and 50% indicated they were very much inclined to select MS as a sub-specialty.

## Post Program Student Self Assessment



What are your feelings, in one word, around exploring a career in neurology at this vantage point?



## Conclusion

The Virtual MSM program was an effective method for continuing this specialized MS educational opportunity to medical students across the US during a global pandemic and increasing medical student interest in a career in neurology and MS care.

*“I am so grateful to the National MS Society for giving me the opportunity to participate in this mentorship program. It was everything that I hoped it would be and more. The program was educational, inspiring, motivating, and most importantly, fun! During this program, I realized that MS might be the perfect neurologic disease for me to specialize in.”*  
Jordan with Dr. Carrie Hersh & Dr. Le Hua