Conceptual perspective-taking (PT) is the empathic ability to take on the viewpoint of another person's thoughts, feelings and attitudes which is essential for successful social interactions.¹ As future healthcare providers, medical students need high levels of PT for understanding their patients' feelings, which can be assisted by high levels of emotional intelligence (EI).² Limitations in available student time can compromise EI and therefore PT. Three-year medical degree programs are excellent locations for comparing student PT under severe restrictions in time.³ Three-year programs with distinctive institutional cultures may encourage students to use varying facets of EI to impact PT.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the predictive relationship of emotional intelligence on perspective-taking between students at two different three-year medical degree programs.

In 2017/18, 205/500 M-1/M-2 medical students voluntarily completed self-reported surveys using the following validated instruments:

- 28-Item Interpersonal Reactivity Index to measure Perspective Taking
- 30-Item Trait EI Questionnaire

IBM® SPSS® 24.0 generated statistical analysis. This research approved by the institution's IRB.

Perspective-taking (alpha=0.7) mean scores were significantly different between (d=0.8, p<.001) the two three-year medical degree programs (mean(sd)=28.6(4.3) vs. 25.1(4.8)), but not compared to a single four-year program (26.7(4.6)). (Fig 1)

Linear regression results for the three-year program with higher PT scores was predicted (R²=0.60, p<.001) by optimism (beta=0.5), motivation (beta=0.3) and assertiveness (beta=-0.6). The second three-year program PT was predicted (R²=0.35, p<.001) by social awareness (beta=0.5) and emotion-regulation (beta=0.3). At a four-year program PT was predicted (R²=0.40, p<.001) by self-esteem (beta=0.4) and relationships (beta=0.4). (Tables 1-3)

Four-year MK medical students EI had more overall impact on PT. Students in one three-year program use “more positive” EI facets such as optimism and motivation, but all use one intrapersonal and one inter-personal EI facet to impact PT.