1. Introduction

- The population of older adults (i.e., age 65+) in Wyoming is expected to increase by 97.7% by 2030.
- Older adults in rural communities face barriers to receiving high-quality health care, such as limited access to geriatric specialists.
- In 2014, only eight board-certified geriatricians practiced in Wyoming.
- It is unlikely the growing need for geriatricians in Wyoming will be met (i.e., 51 by 2030);
- Thus, it is necessary to educate the providers already in place about geriatric care.
- Previous research has identified the training needs of providers in a rural area; however, little is known about their barriers to obtaining geriatric training.
- Understanding the geriatric training needs and barriers of health care professionals is critical to providing essential education and improving the health care of older adults in rural communities in and around Wyoming.

2. Objectives

- Understand the geriatric training backgrounds of health care providers in and around Wyoming.
- Elucidate the barriers to training experienced by health care providers in and around Wyoming.
- Determine the geriatric training needs of health care providers in and around Wyoming.

3. Methods

Sample
- Health care providers (N = 398) in and around Wyoming.
- 46.5% of respondents indicated that 75–100% of their clientele are over the age of 65.
- Most frequent health care occupation among respondents was Registered Nursing (n = 67; 16.8%).
- Surveys were disseminated at conferences, association meetings, and professional lists.

Instrument
- 18-item survey that assessed:
  - Current geriatric health care practices.
  - Geriatric training needs.
  - Barriers to geriatric training.
  - Preferences for delivery of training.

4. Analysis

- Demographic characteristics and descriptive analyses obtained via SPSS, version 21.

5. Results

- Majority of health care providers in and around Wyoming lack formal training in geriatrics (n = 290; 72.9%).
- 65.1% of respondents expressed interest in obtaining a certificate in geriatrics/gerontology.
- Majority of providers currently obtain training via computer-based/online and in-house trainings.
- Providers identified a need for additional training in Alzheimer’s Disease and mental health concerns in older adults.
- Providers identified multiple barriers to obtaining training in geriatrics (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Barriers to training. This figure illustrates the most common barriers to obtaining training in geriatrics.

6. Conclusion

- Many providers lack the training necessary to provide evidence-based services to older adults but are interested in pursuing educational opportunities.
- Given the increasing rate of Alzheimer’s Disease and the high annual prevalence rate of suicide (e.g., approximately 16.04% in 2013) in older adults, educational efforts targeting these areas are critical for improved health care of this population.
- However, barriers to training, such as distance and cost, may prevent access to educational opportunities.
- Increasing the number of free online trainings may be a quick and cost-effective way to disseminate educational material across a rural state.
- To address time constraints, trainings should be tailored to the needs, knowledge, and experience-level of providers.
- Training formats should range from brief and basic to in-depth and complex to further accommodate time constraints and desired level of knowledge.
- Finally, incentives for obtaining training should be offered by employers.

7. References