

Library of Life – Stories of Rural Medicine (A Learning Tool in Medical Education)

- Grace Perez, Rebecca Malhi, Melissa Monaghan and Aaron Johnston
- Office of Distributed Learning and Rural Initiatives



Study Background

- “Human Libraries” concept to challenge stereotypes and prejudices through dialogue, mostly in social sciences
- Bring people of different groups together for conversations
- Reduce prejudice by fostering understanding of different perspectives
- Re-purposed for medical education; adapted new term “Library of Life”

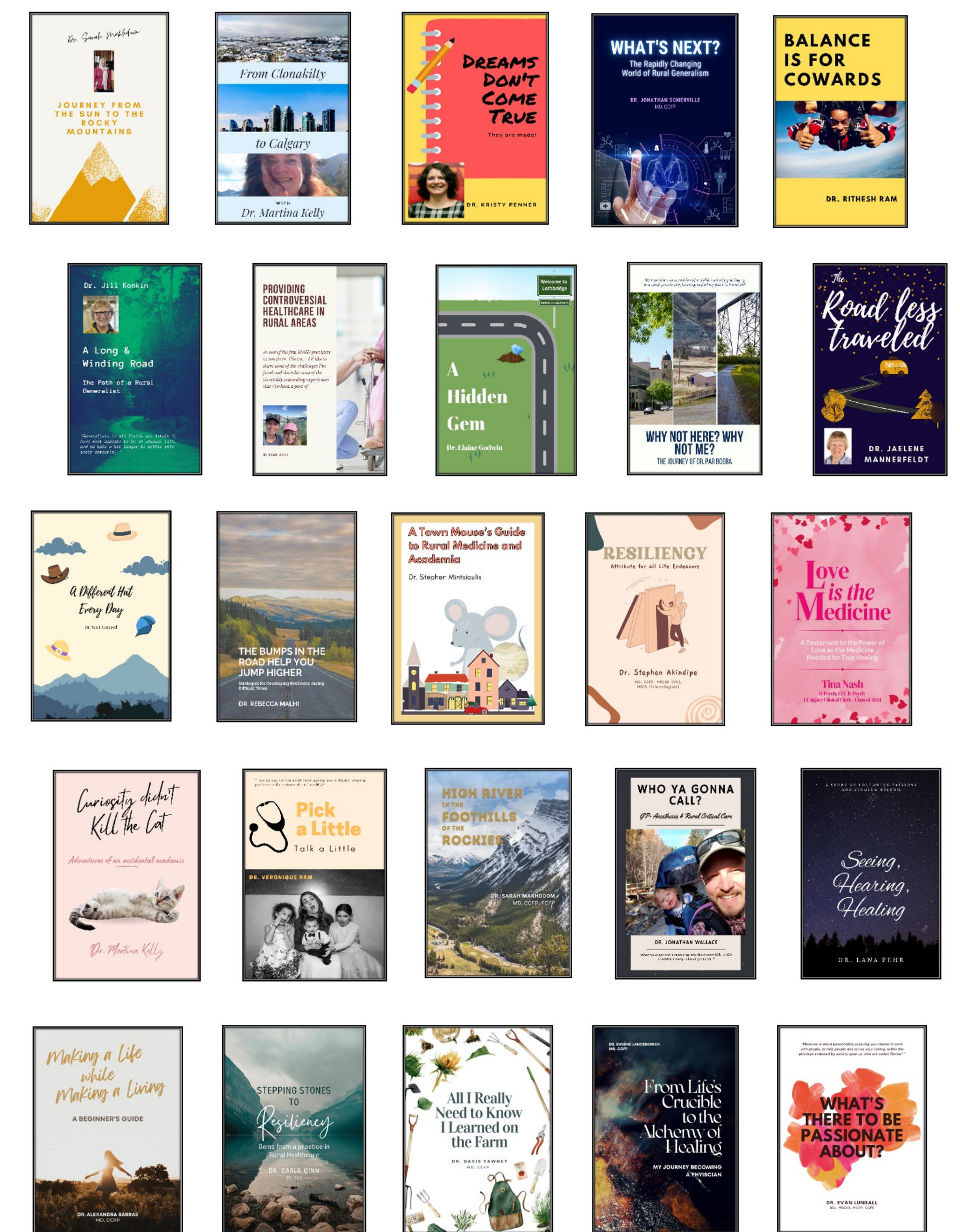
Purpose

- Facilitate understanding of rural practice
- Provide a “Learning Commons” environment
- Deliver medical curriculum
- Assess effectiveness of Library of Life

Method

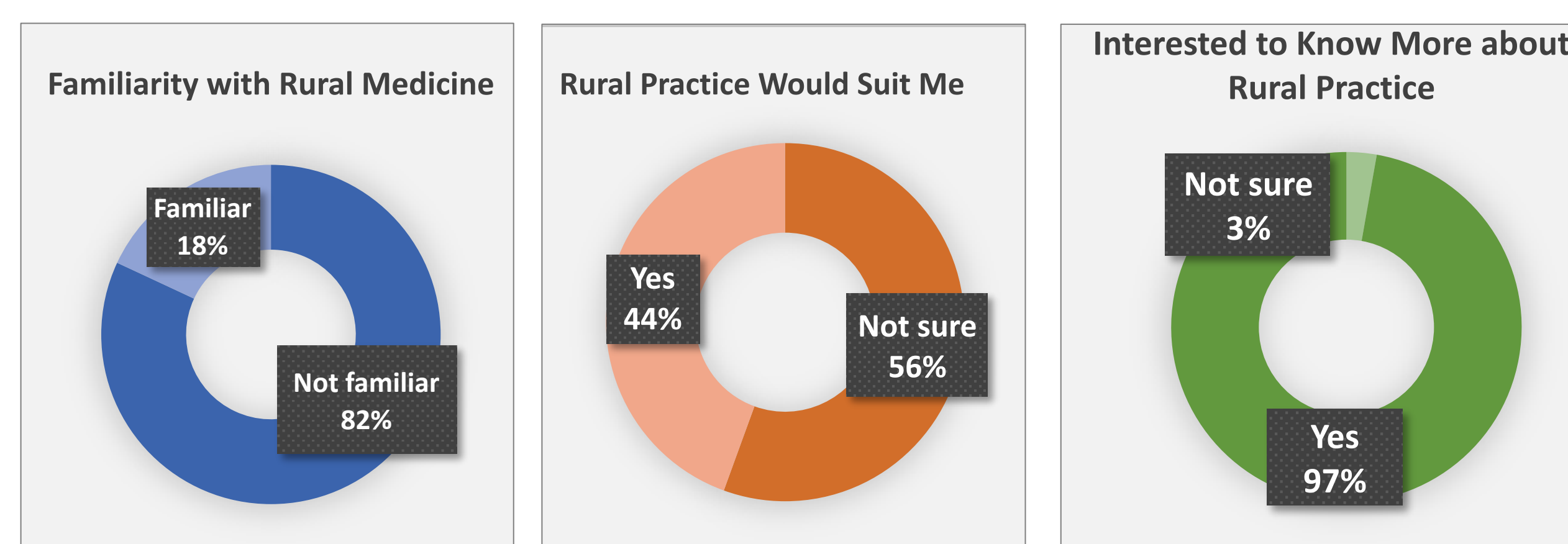
- 3 Library of Life events (2020, 2022, 2023)
- 90+ Readers (pre-med & medical students)
- 25 Books (with rural practice or rural interest)
- Pre- and post-session evaluations of student perceptions of rural medicine

Human Books Catalogue



Readers

- 72 students provided data
- 82% - Female; 18% - Male
- 82% - 18-25 yrs; 18% - 26+ yrs
- 20% - Rural background
- 21% - Rural high school



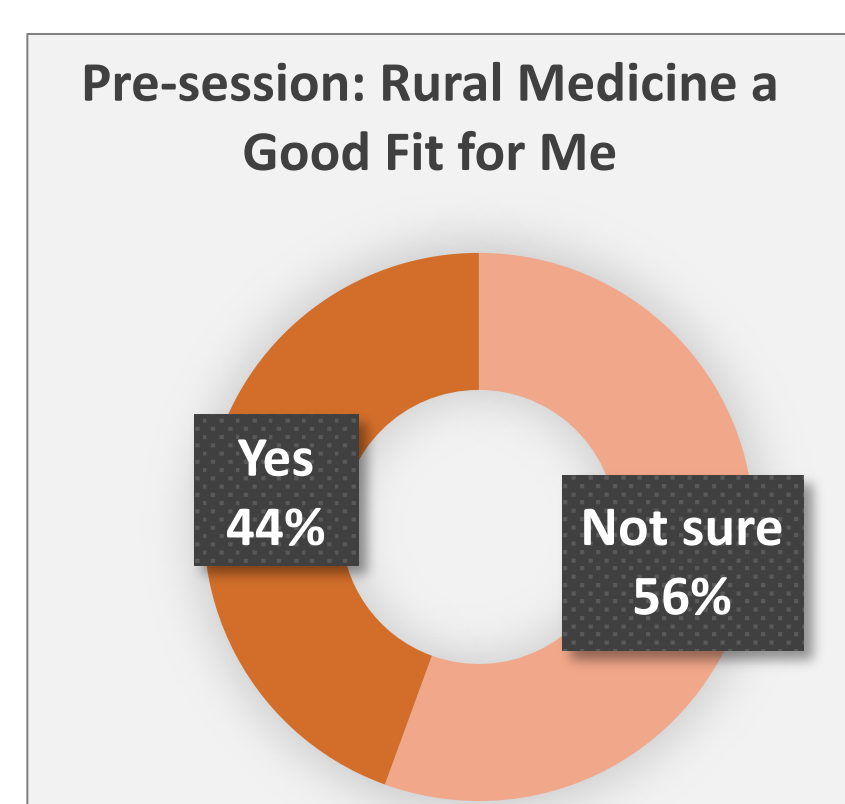
Results

We observed changes in perceptions about rural medicine (pre vs post):

1. Personal fit or suitability: 4.11 vs 4.42 (p=0.009)*
2. Professional benefits of rural practice: 3.49 vs 3.88 (p=0.013)*
3. Consideration of rural practice: 44% vs 72% (p<0.001)**

Perception of Rural Medicine		N	Mean	SD	Test Statistic	p*
Rural medicine would be a suitable career option for me	Pre	47	3.49	0.856	-2.604	0.009
	Post	48	3.88	0.959		
Having wide scope of practice would make for an interesting career	Pre	47	4.15	0.884	-1.079	0.072
	Post	48	4.40	0.869		
There are professional benefits of practice in a rural community	Pre	47	4.11	0.729	-2.497	0.013
	Post	48	4.42	0.846		
I want opportunities to connect directly with people in rural practice	Pre	47	4.45	0.717	-1.069	0.285
	Post	48	4.50	0.772		

* Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test for paired observations



** McNemar's Test for change



Conclusions

- Students have low familiarity with rural medicine
- Library of life gave a chance to **gain familiarity through narrative** (to walk in a rural health professional's shoes)
- It is difficult to change perceptions; Library of Life seems to have **the power to create change**
- Use of narratives can **create connections** and **challenge held beliefs** about rural practice
- With narratives, we can make students consider things that traditional medical teaching may not
- The Library of Life can be an effective learning tool in medical education

