The purpose of this poster is to present preliminary findings from an exploratory pilot study that determined patient activation levels and relationships between demographic characteristics, self-assessment of self-management capabilities, and patient activation levels of college students with a chronic illness.

Methods: University IRB approval was obtained before the study commenced. Convenience sampling was used to recruit participants at least 18 years old and an undergraduate college student with a chronic illness, through social media, word of mouth, and paper flyers distributed on campus. A link to the online survey was provided and potential participants were able to review the study information and informed consent information before clicking a clearly labeled button that indicated agreement to participate. The online survey included demographic questions, the Patient Activation Measure (PAM®) instrument, and an investigator developed question (5-point Likert Type scale to determine participant agreement with the statement, “I am fully capable of managing my chronic illness without the help of another individual”). The PAM® instrument has established reliability and validity and includes ten items that measure four developmental domains of patient activation [1]. Participants used a 4-point Likert Type Scale to indicate agreement or disagreement with each statement. The full measure was scored on a scale from 0 to 100, with scores corresponding to patient activation level, with levels indicating progressively higher levels of patient activation. Level 1 (0.0-47.0) corresponds to an individual not yet understanding their self-management role; Level 2 (47.1-55.1) indicates the individual may lack knowledge or confidence; Level 3 (55.2-72.4) reveals the beginnings of engagement and Level 4 (72.5-100.0) indicates that the individual engages in self-management behaviors.

Findings: Participants (n=30) ranged in age from 18-22 (x =21); 77% (n=24) female. PAM® results: Level 1: 32.3% (n=10); Level 2: 29.0% (N=9); Level 3: 25.8% (n=8); and Level 4: 9.7% (n=3). Indicating that more than half the sample do not understand their self-management role or lack knowledge or confidence; 25.8% exhibit the beginnings of engagement and only 3 engage in self-management behaviors. A Pearson correlation was calculated examining the relationship between participant age and PAM® activation levels. A weak negative correlation that was not significant was found (r (28) = -.153, p > .05). Another Pearson correlation was calculated to examine the relationship between the investigator created, “capable of managing” question and PAM® activation levels. A moderate positive correlation was found (r (28) = .490, p < .01), indicating a significant relationship between participant self-assessment of self-management ability and their PAM® activation level.

Conclusions: This pilot study revealed that participants exhibited low levels of patient activation not associated with their age and were able to accurately assess their own self-management ability. Further research is needed to develop interventions to assist this population with the development of chronic disease self-management skills.