Transforming Medical Trips into a Significant Learning Opportunity in Global Health

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Agenda

- Background
- Objectives
- Methods:
  - Program Description
  - Learning Experience
  - Outcomes
- Conclusions
- Future Plans

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Background

- The increase in global migration, mobilization and new emerging diseases have created the need for formal training in global health issues within medical education.

- For the last several years, medical mission trips during medical school have become an increasingly common vehicle through which expose future doctors to the field of global health.
Medical students from Florida International University's (FIU), College of Medicine, started participating in medical trips to Haiti in 2010 under the auspices of International Health Connection, a non-profit organization created by former faculty and students. First intended as mere international experience, the trips quickly evolved into an important component of the comprehensive training of future physicians.

Rationale

- Limited international opportunity along medical curriculum
- Gain first-hand experience practicing with limited resources
- Physicians are better able to address the health needs of underserved populations when trained in Global Health (Crandall, 1993)

Objectives of Medical Trips

- Provide medical students with international learning experiences that are easily applicable and integrated within their medical curriculum, e.g. clinical skill competency
- Enhance understanding of global health issues and increase cultural competency
- Enhance health care administration skills in settings with limited resources
Objectives of Medical Trips

- Improve clinical skills to provide effective care in limited-resource settings
- Promote interdisciplinary work and cooperation within medical teams composed of physicians, nurses, and medical and public health students, among other disciplines

Evolving

- From missionaries & volunteers ➔ To Global Health professionals
- From charity ➔ To social justice and sustainable development

Global Health Experience: Integrated dimensions

- Medical mission trips for medical, nursing, & public health students: Interdisciplinary experience
- Internship opportunities for public health students
- Scholar opportunities:
  - Research
  - Conferences
  - Publications
Trip Stages
- Before the trip:
  - Planning and Preparation
  - Fundraising
  - Tropical medicine training . Language training
- During the trip:
  - Accountability
  - Data / cases collection
- After the trip:
  - Presentation of specific cases
  - Sharing their experience
  - Follow ups

Our Trips
GLOBAL HEALTH TRIPS
- Training
- Clinic
- Orphanage
- Local Hospital
- Research
- Sharing experience

Trip Components
### Global Health Competencies*

1. Capacity-building
2. Collaboration and Partnering
3. Ethical Reasoning and Professional Practice
4. Health Equity and Social Justice Leadership
5. Project and Process Management
6. Socio-cultural and Political Awareness
7. Strategic Analysis and Evaluation

* Source: ASPH

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### Global Health Competencies

**3 Categories**

- Public Health
- Health Care Administration
- Health Equity

**PH competencies**

- Health Equity
- Epidemiology
- Planning/programming
- Interdisciplinary work
- Culture
- Clinical
- Social Medicine
- Public Health
- Global Health Competencies

**Cross Cutting competencies**

- Social justice and unfair conditions
- Cultural competency
- Interdisciplinary work

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### Learning outcomes

By attending trips, students learn:

- SDH and Health Equity: The impact of poverty and socioeconomic conditions on health status
- Medicine and Public Health must work hand-in-hand:
  - Immigrant health – connection between local population with those in the US
- Cross Cutting competencies: Social justice and unfair conditions, Cultural competency, Interdisciplinary work
Summary of IHC Activities

- Nine medical trips to Haiti: 38 students
- 2 Public Health trips to Peru
- 5 MPH student interns in Haiti and Peru
- Mobile clinics are set up in orphanages, schools, buildings and existing clinics in urban and rural areas
- 1,400 patients treated with more than 2,000 encounters

Trip Evaluation

- An anonymous, online survey was conducted following two of the most recent trips to Haiti – November 2012 and June 2013
  - 24 responses
- Questions covered clinical experience, logistics, satisfaction with staff, facilities and operational component
- 100% of student participants were either satisfied or very satisfied with their overall experience in Haiti

Student Comments

- I can’t think of anything to improve this clinic, it ran extremely smoothly.
- This was one of the best experiences—clinical and overall—that I’ve ever had. I knew it would be, and I was not disappointed in the least bit!
- I learned more about pharmacology during the trip because I spent a lot of time filling prescriptions.
- I learned about focused-history taking and patient examination. I improved upon my general practice abilities.
- I feel a lot more confident in my physical examination skills. I also learned what people with nutritional deficiencies looked and felt like.
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**Areas for Improvement**

- Translators: Barriers to language is one of the big obstacles
- Ensuring that exchange between examination/pharmacy goes smoothly
- Moving a big group is a challenge of resources and timing
- Daily debriefing after work

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**Key Elements for Success**

**ACADEMIC**

- Develop learning objectives to meet core MED/GH competencies
- Provide activities which are integrated in their respective curriculums
- Internships, enhance clinical skills, research and scholarly opportunities
- Include cross-cutting competencies
  - Social justice & health equity
  - Cultural Competency
- Continuity of learning experience
  - Follow-up of cases, additional research, scholarly publications and presentations
- Develop evaluation tools and make programmatic changes based on feedback

**OPERATIVE / LOGISTIC**

- Assigning responsibilities from the beginning:
  - Medication
  - Protocols
- Provide training prior to the trip:
  - Diagnosis and treatment of common health conditions
  - Local language
  - Pharmacy
  - Collecting feedback and evaluation

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**Conclusion**

- Systematically planned medical trips can prove an essential component of global health training within medical education by designing relevant and specific learning objectives within the medical curriculum.
- Key elements for success include assigning responsibilities and providing training, feedback, and evaluation.
- Students gain confidence in clinical skills and management.
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References

References, Cont’