Influences of an interdisciplinary global health program on cultural awareness and future global health involvement: A pilot study

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Background

- Medical students and residents have an interest in being involved in global health activities.
- Barriers to residents’ involvement in global health include lack of educational or field experience structure, lack of financial resources, and lack of time.
- Participation in college, medical school, or residency specialty-specific global health programs makes a physician more likely to be involved with global health work or work with immigrant, refugee, or underserved populations in the future.
- McGaw Medical Center of Northwestern University’s Global Health Clinical Scholars Program is a 2 year multidisciplinary program that includes:
  - Medical and Ethics Simulations
  - Lectures in a variety of topics including medicine, law, economics, sociology, environmental health, and ethics
  - Scholarly Project
  - At least 1 month of field experience. Pediatric residents can choose from established sites in Tanzania, Bolivia, Refugee Health, or an alternative well-established site.
- Formal debriefing

Hypothesis

A multidisciplinary approach to global health education within residency training improves overall self-reported cultural awareness and is a predictor of global health involvement in future career choices.

Methods

- Self-reported questionnaire of physicians who graduated from the Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children’s Hospital of Chicago/McGaw Northwestern Pediatric Residency Program from 2013-2019
- Collected
  - Based on Baseline Characteristics
  - Likert Scales of Agreement (scale of 10) regarding self awareness and cultural awareness within the global health sphere
  - Current involvement in global health work or work with immigrant/refugee populations
  - GHCS graduate satisfaction with the program and important lessons learned
- Analysis
  - T-test and Chi-Square Analysis as appropriate

Results

- GHCS graduates agreed:
  - The GHCS Program helped me to think more critically about the impact that I would have as a visiting trainee in another country. (Mean 8.125; Range 6-10)
  - The GHCS Program helped me to think more critically about the impact that being a visiting trainee in another country would have on me. (Mean 8.75; Range 7-10)
  - The GHCS Program helped me to prepare for many of the obstacles I would encounter in a culture different from my own. (Mean 7.25; Range 6-9)
  - Attending lectures and simulations led by providers from many different backgrounds including, but not limited to, law, economics, sociology, environmental health, and ethics helped me to understand global health within a broader context. (Mean 7.5; Range 5-9)
  - GHCS Graduates were neutral:
    - Participating in the GHCS Program influenced my desire to continue to do global health work as an attending. (Mean 6.375; Range 5-8)
    - I have utilized tools gained during my time in the GHCS Program in real-life difficult situations involving cultures different than my own. (Mean 6.25; Range 5-9)
  - GHCS graduates were likely to recommend a multidisciplinary global health program to future trainees as a stepping-stone to a global health career. (Mean 8.35; Range 5-10)

Conclusions

- An interdisciplinary global health program has an influence on cultural and self-awareness within the global health sphere.
- There is a need for further institutional structure, support, and funding for global health activities and care of refugee/immigrant populations in order to increase global health involvement.
- Future studies will expand to include graduates from other specialties at McGaw Medical Center of Northwestern University.

References