**Evaluating and Responding to Medical Student Demand for Global Health Education**

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**Introduction**

With the constant interchange of people and diseases across continents, “the separation between domestic and international health problems is no longer useful.” (1) Look no further than the 80,000 refugees currently resettled in the United States for proof that health is a global phenomenon. The medical community needs to respond to the changing global healthcare landscape by preparing future healthcare leaders to think and act globally. Medical students across the U.S. recognize this need and are actively seeking opportunities to participate in service-oriented organizations.

The purpose of this study was to capture the SKMC Medical students’ interest in global health and assess the need for relevant coursework. Design & Methodology

A global health survey was offered to all medical students at Sidney Kimmel Medical College (SKMC) during Spring 2014. Two hundred thirty four participants elected to complete the anonymous 27-question survey. Data collection was facilitated through a public, web-based survey program over a one-month period.

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**Survey Results: Key Findings**

- Eighty four percent of survey participants indicated either some or strong interest in receiving global health training while at Sidney Kimmel Medical College.

- Seventy three percent of survey respondents said that the current curriculum at SKMC provides adequate global health education.

“How much influence did the opportunity to participate in service-oriented organizations have on your decision to enroll at SKMC?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No influence</th>
<th>Some influence</th>
<th>Strong influence</th>
<th>I had not heard of any of these service-oriented Jefferson student organizations</th>
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<tr>
<td>16%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>50%</td>
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Out of 16 options, the 5 highest ranked topics to be included in global health education at SKMC were:

- Immigrant/Refugee Health
- Travel Medicine
- Communicable Disease
- Clinical Medicine in Resource-Limited Settings
- Disaster Relief and Complex Emergencies

**Opportunities/experiences students were interested in pursuing when applying to SKMC:**

- Engaging in research
- Working with underserved populations
- Working with refugee, immigrant, or asylee patients in the United States
- Practicing global public health
- Providing clinical care outside of the United States

**Number of Students**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offering</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tr>
<td>0</td>
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**Please rate your level of interest in obtaining elective global health training at SKMC:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No interest</th>
<th>Some interest</th>
<th>Strong interest</th>
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<tr>
<td>35%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>15%</td>
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**4th Year Elective: Global Health at Home: Dimension of Refugee Health**

**Goals and Objectives of Elective**

- Gain exposure to global health within the local context.
- Participate in different clinical care models for refugee populations.
- Develop knowledge base in global burden of diseases and post-refoulement determinants of health in refugees/immigrants.
- Identify social context to individual, family, and community wellness for immigrant and refugee populations.
- Learn principles of trauma-informed clinical practice.

**Curriculum Components**

- Spend at least three half-days per week working in a refugee health clinic, functioning as a full member of the office staff.
- Participate in two different selected social service agencies or programs and work with them at least three half-days per week.
- Participate in community-based refugee health event or program.
- Participate in weekly guest seminar series on refugee health.
- In consultation with faculty facilitators, develop a presentation focusing on one clinically relevant topic within refugee health. Focus areas include: Population-centered presentation (such as pertinent history/background of immigrants or refugee populations), Disease-based (such as pertinent epidemiology concerns for a given population) Areas of advocacy: unaccompanied minors, immigration reform, torture prevention, LGBTQ

- Create outline describing a social service program available to refugees and/or immigrant populations and the program’s function in the refugee health community, which will contribute to building a database of available refugee resources.
- Participate and update ongoing research efforts with Findings and experiences.
- Access and utilize refugee health longitudinal database
- Master principles of Community Based Participatory Research and its applications in refugee populations
- Facilitate roundtable discussion for M1/M2 focused on cultural sensitivity in clinical settings.

**Conclusion**

The data from the Sidney Kimmel Medical College (SKMC) student survey indicates that a strong majority value elective global health training, yet there is a perceived lack of global health content in the curriculum. The implication of this study catalyzed SKMC to add a refugee health fourth-year elective opportunity to augment students’ learning experience and cultural competence, as well as improve the quality of comprehensive healthcare offered to immigrant and refugee communities. This elective will serve to incorporate global healthcare into medical education at SKMC and potentially at other medical schools in the US. Students who enroll in this elective will gain extensive exposure to the unique health challenges of refugee populations and to the network of social and healthcare services that address these needs.

“Whether you end up practicing global medicine, working with these populations is a great way of becoming culturally competent and learning how to communicate and treat diverse patients.” (SKMC Student)

“We live in a global world, even if you don’t practice medicine outside the borders of the US, you still will practice global medicine in treating refugee patients in their families, or even just practicing medicine with patients who travel often and are exposed to disease outside of the US.” (SKMC Student)

“We can’t effectively practice global health if we haven’t learned enough about it!” (SKMC Student)

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“Understanding health as a global issue provides a greater worldview for treating patients even in your own city.” (SKMC Student)