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Rethinking Rethinking Emergency Response to Mass Casualty Incidents: Disaster Medicine Education and the Role of Medical Students

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Rethinking Rethinking Emergency Response to Mass Casualty Incidents: Disaster Medicine Education and the Role of Medical Students

Introduction: The threat of a mass casualty incident (MCI) is one that must be taken seriously and for which hospitals must be prepared. In the wake of a disaster, emergency departments are often taxed beyond their ability to handle the demands of incoming traumas. In response to this, Dr. Edward Jasper, an emergency physician at Thomas Jefferson Hospital, designed the Hospital Emergency Response Team (HERT) to alleviate the pressure on the ED during a MCI. The HERT is a team of nursing and medical students who are FEMA trained to respond in the event of a MCI.

Objective: The primary objective of this study was to gather feedback from students about the HERT and the training they received as part of the course.

Methods: A survey was distributed to 29 students who have been members of the HERT for at least a year. Answers were reported on a modified Likert Scale where 0 corresponds to 'Strongly Disagree', 100 corresponds to 'Strongly Agree' and 50 is 'Neutral'.

Results: The response rate was 58.6%. The responses to the statements indicate that the majority of students value being members of the HERT but want to receive more education on disaster medicine.

Conclusion: The majority of HERT students believe it is a valuable part of their medical education. Furthermore, the majority of the respondents felt that they would not have received

this education elsewhere in medical school, indicating that there is a desire for more formal disaster medicine education within the traditional curriculum.