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## Development of a HERT Trained Interprofessional Student Decontamination Team for Hospital Mass Casualty Response

Ashley Wong

Thomas Jefferson University, [ashley.wong@jefferson.edu](mailto:ashley.wong@jefferson.edu)

Claire Zurlo

Thomas Jefferson University, [claire.zurlo@jefferson.edu](mailto:claire.zurlo@jefferson.edu)

Edward Jasper

Thomas Jefferson University, [edward.jasper@jefferson.edu](mailto:edward.jasper@jefferson.edu)

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**SI/CTR Abstract**

**Development of a HERT Trained Interprofessional Student Decontamination Team  
for Hospital Mass Casualty Response**

**Ashley Wong, Claire Zurlo\*\*, Edward Jasper\***

(\*) indicates primary project advisor

(\*\*) indicates another student who is declaring the same project as primary for SI

**Introduction:** FEMA's Hospital Emergency Response Training (HERT) prepares healthcare workers to decontaminate patients during a mass casualty incident. This depletes the emergency department (ED) staff when they are needed most though. Developing an interprofessional student composed HERT team to screen and decontaminate affected populations will allow ED staff to handle more medically complex situations during a mass casualty event.

**Methods:** Likert scale surveys were conducted among ED physicians and nurses at Jefferson Hospital and HERT trained medical and nursing students at Jefferson University. These were to evaluate the training program and ED staff opinions of utilizing a student HERT team to respond to a mass casualty events compared to standard ED practices without student involvement. The survey results were tabulated and averaged in Excel.

**Results:** Between February and September 2019, 46 students and 26 ED staff completed the HERT training. The student evaluation of the program was excellent (4.9/5) as was the value of the student decontamination team for mass casualty response (4.95/5).

**Discussion:** These findings suggest that the ED staff highly values the involvement of a student HERT team in the disaster plan. It also supports student interest in HERT and that HERT trained students feel prepared to respond if necessary. This is essential to establish the effectiveness and efficacy of utilizing a student HERT team to ensure adequate staff is available in the case of a mass casualty event. This model is one that should be considered for academic centers that are affiliated with nursing and medical schools.