

“Doctors who make a difference”: Inspiring rural medical undergraduates to consider themselves as part of the Global medical community

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Objective:

To deliver a global health curriculum which is engaging and provides context for future medical careers.

Design:

Twelve one-hour sessions for Year 4 students. Six two-hour sessions for Year 5 (final year) students. Sessions included a mix of visiting presenters, whole class discussion, small group research, debates, field visits, and community activities.

Topics covered one or more of the following themes: Indigenous health, Refugee health, Population and Public Health, Disaster Medicine, Ethical Practice, Health systems and governance, Environmental determinants of health.

Setting:

University of Tasmania, Rural Clinical School

Participants:

Year 4 and Year 5 (final year) students

Main outcome measures:

Student evaluations, reflective practice assignments

Results:

In the Year 4 class, 50% of students rated these sessions as “Valuable” or “Extremely valuable”, 45% rated the sessions “neutral” or “partly valuable” while 7% saw no value in the sessions. Final year students demonstrated a significantly higher level of interest and participation than Year 4 students.

Rural Clinical School support, strong student leadership and inspirational visiting speakers were identified as key factors in engaging students and promoting ongoing discussion.

Conclusions:

Maintaining medical student altruism can be difficult as the pressures of clinical assessments, graduation, future employment and competition for post graduate pathways become the focus of early medical careers.

We believe incorporating “Global Health” teaching in the final two years of the rural undergraduate curriculum has helped link related teaching in the early years of the course with traditional clinical disciplines and the “big picture” issues of future medical practice.

The biggest challenge is to deliver sessions that are seen as interesting and relevant by all students, not just those who are “already interested”. For 2013, our aim is to build on the experience of 2012 with further innovation, inspiration and enthusiasm to develop a flexible curriculum that will engage all students.

Presented at the Annual ACRRM Conference , Fremantle, WA, 2012

Thoughts on the presentation (15 minutes with 5 minutes discussion/questions)

- Introduction/overview
 - `Why we started this
 - The broad themes
 - The people/resources involved
- The student experience
 - Summer elective
 - The Walk/ride to work
- Student involvement in the delivery
 - Debate
 - Facilitating session on Health and the environment
- Summary/where to from here
 - Feedback/evaluation/assessment
 - Embedding in the existing curriculum
 - Where to from here/vision for the future