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Strengthening the capacity of medical faculty in Haiti to appraise clinical research papers and participate in journal clubs

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Background: In Haiti, very few medical training institutions offer courses aimed at understanding and evaluating clinical research methodology. Many medical instructors have little to no knowledge or experience conducting or assessing clinical research. The lack of access to this knowledge creates a challenge for research capacity building at medical facilities. Basic research methodology is needed for original research. It is also necessary for Haitian faculty to have competency in research methodology to provide guidance and mentorship for future physicians. Zanmi Lasante, a Haitian based medical organization, conducted a workshop aimed at strengthening the capacity of medical faculty to critically appraise clinical research papers and effectively participate in journal clubs.

Methods: Medical program directors and nurse educators from two medical teaching hospitals were invited to participate in a 20-hour workshop. The course material included clinical research papers found using HINARI, a guideline for critical research appraisal, a review chart and a PowerPoint presentation. Study design, bias, measures of association, statistical significance, techniques and approaches to facilitating a journal club were major concepts discussed. A pre-and-post-questionnaire was given to evaluate attitude. Participants were also asked to prepare and lead a journal club within their departments two-weeks after the training.

Findings: There were 16 participants for the workshop. Results from the pre-questionnaire demonstrated that 12.5% was very comfortable reading or presenting a clinical research article. None of the participants reported feeling comfortable participating in a journal club. Post-questionnaire results revealed an increased to 75% for reading, 25% for presenting a clinical research article and 87.5% for participating in a journal club. A total of 87.5% participants expressed moderate or high satisfaction with the workshop. After the course all the participants conducted in a journal club in their respective departments.

Interpretation: Zanmi Lasante organized a research methodology workshop to strengthen the capacity of trainers to make appraisal of clinical research papers and effectively participate in a journal clubs. Participants felt more comfortable reading a clinical research paper and conducting a journal club. Potentially adding workshops to medical training institution's curriculum may help future research capacity building efforts.

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A study in South American host perspectives of US medical personnel on foreign medical rotations

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Background: International rotations are very popular amongst US medical schools and residency programs. South American rotations offer unique clinical and language experiences. The purpose of our study was to investigate how US trainees are perceived by South American hosts so US institutions can better prepare their personnel to optimize the experience within medical training.

Methods: Our survey was designed to assess the attitudes and experiences of South American physician-hosts during their interactions with visiting US trainees. The survey was exempt after review by the University of Utah IRB. It was sent to 206 physicians throughout South America via host program directors. Participation was voluntary. As of October 2015, 40 physicians have completed the survey. This study will present preliminary findings from those responders.

Findings: A total of 40 physicians took the survey. Respondents were from Colombia, Brazil and Chile. Most were Emergency Medicine physicians (30, 75%). Primary objectives in hosting were evenly split between improving own medical knowledge (23%), clinical skills (26%) and broadening cultural exposure (30%). Knowledge exchange occurred in both directions, 54% felt they improved US trainee knowledge and 80% felt they had their own knowledge base improved by the trainee. Most thought that 4-8 weeks was the optimal time for a rotation (78%). Free text responses highlighted the value of cultural interaction to both parties. Suggested areas of improvement included the importance of the visiting trainee's ability speak their native language (92%). This was emphasized in free text responses. Other areas of improvement included knowledge of endemic diseases, understanding local culture and understanding host resources. All respondents would continue to host US trainees.

Interpretation: Most South American hosts take part in international exchange for educational and cultural purposes and find this interaction beneficial. Our survey suggests that the relationship works best when the medical trainee is a resident with the ability to speak the native language, a good fund of knowledge of endemic diseases and the ability to visit for four or more weeks. Overall, the relationships between US trainees and South American hosts appears beneficial to both parties in terms of medical and cultural experiences.

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Improving hand hygiene at a district hospital in rural Rwanda

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Background: Healthcare-associated infections remain a significant risk for hospitalized patients around the world. Hand hygiene is known to be a critical action in ensuring patient safety. The