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Interprofessional Problem Solving through Community Health: An Interdisciplinary Global Health Immersion Pilot

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BACKGROUND

The increasing globalization of healthcare has created a high demand for professionals trained in cultural competence and interdisciplinary decision-making. Nurses, who deliver 90% of healthcare worldwide, are well suited to address complex global health issues; however, few international educational opportunities exist for nursing students through which they may learn to navigate diverse cultural and professional landscapes.

OBJECTIVES

This pilot integrated community health nursing clinical experience with an existing business course to teach students to work abroad as part of an interdisciplinary team. The project aimed to increase awareness of the central role of nursing in global health and foster collaboration among members of the nursing school and several other university departments.

METHODS

Students completed course work in social entrepreneurship and poverty alleviation and worked in teams to determine project deliverables. Students traveled to partner sites throughout Central America to implement planned interventions according to each organization's needs.

RESULTS

Six nursing students successfully participated in the course and completed project deliverables. Students reported a greater understanding of the role professional nurses play in global health and a greater appreciation for the benefits of interdisciplinary teamwork.

CONCLUSION

By integrating global health experiences into the core nursing curriculum, universities can increase the number of graduate nurses who are equipped to care for patients in global communities. In order to advance the role of nursing in global health, it is critical to continue to develop opportunities for real world experiential learning.