Undergraduate Global Community Research Experience

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INTRODUCTION

- Undergraduate nursing students do not have many opportunities to participate in nursing research.
- The U.S. is facing a critical shortage in nurse faculty and nurse scientists
- The increasingly globalized society requires innovative solutions to address individual and societal healthcare issues.
- Mentorship from professors has allows undergraduate students to become involved in research and consider a career as a nurse scientist.

EXPERIENCES

- Four third semester undergraduate nursing students traveled to Panama with professors to attend a research conference and participate in a observational community-based health survey research project already in place in the country.
- 27 family health surveys were collected, door-to-door in a rural Panama community.
- Students completed a survey of the experiential learning consisting of: the reason for participating, identification of research principles learned, the necessary additional preparation of future students, and aspects of research enjoyed/not enjoyed.

BACKGROUND

- Prior to departure, the students completed a review of informed consent, human subjects certification, database elements and the conduct of research.
- The students studied Spanish so they would be able to understand conversations during the community based observation experience.

OBSERVATIONS

- The students desired to learn the research process, understand evidence based practice and understand the role of the nurse scientist throughout this experience.
- All of the students felt they obtained research skills throughout the global experience.
- This global experience consisted of a very limited number of students (n=4) and thus the results cannot be generalized.
- The cost of international experiences can be perceived as burdensome without external funding.

DISCUSSION

- This research experience greatly shaped the students perception of research, and helped them consider a career as a nurse scientist.
- The increasingly globalized society has a critical need for nurses with knowledge of health conditions that affect different populations.
- These experiences will increase students understanding of research in a global setting and positively impact transition into doctoral education.
- Nursing students who engage in global healthcare experiences related to nursing research and international scholarship can meet these needs.

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