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International health: what is the role of fourth year pharmacy students and a pharmacist on an interdisciplinary medical brigade in Guatemala?

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International health: what is the role of fourth year pharmacy students and a pharmacist on an interdisciplinary medical brigade in Guatemala?

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Background

- Timmy Global Health (TGH) is a non-profit organization that expands international access to healthcare and empowers both students and volunteers to confront challenging global health issues.
- A pharmacist's knowledge of drug products, therapeutic substitution, patient counseling, drug dosing and calculations, pharmacy organization and workflow, and dispensing efficiency make them a valuable asset to a brigade team.

Objective

- To evaluate the roles and impact of fourth year pharmacy students and a pharmacist integrated into an interdisciplinary team on a medical brigade in the surrounding area of Quetzaltenango, Guatemala.

Methods

- A retrospective analysis of a single interdisciplinary medical brigade in Guatemala during August 16-24, 2014.
- This project has been designated as exempt by University of Rhode Island Institutional Review Board.
- An electronic survey was administered to all team members upon completion of travel.
- Medical brigade members included:
 - Boston College pre-medical students (including 2014 graduates), college students (including non-healthcare majors [i.e. international-studies students]), medical doctors, and TGH employees and volunteers.

Methods

- Survey questions collected information on the following:
 - The most useful service provided by the pharmacist and pharmacy students on the brigade.
 - Change in perspective towards the role of pharmacy on an interdisciplinary healthcare team.
 - Satisfaction with communication, efficiency, professionalism and knowledge of the pharmacist and pharmacy students.

Results

- The survey was distributed to 36 members and 13 responded.

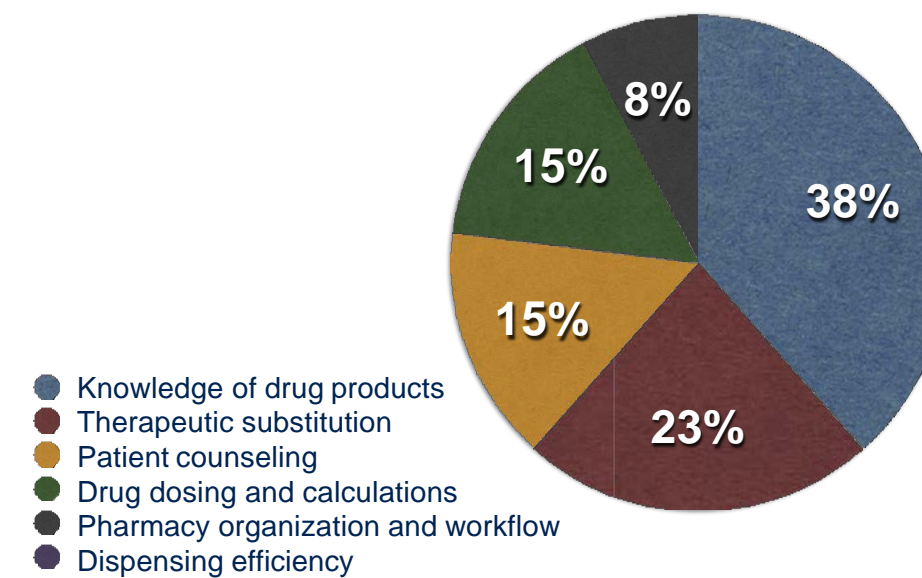
Variable	Participants, n(%)
Female	9 (69.23)
Age (years)	
18-20	4 (30.77)
21-30	7 (53.85)
51+	2 (15.38)
Role on August 2014 brigade	
Medical Doctor	2 (15.38)
Pre-medical student	10 (76.92)
TGH Coordinator/Employee	1 (7.69)
Previous interdisciplinary experience	9 (69.23)
Previous interaction with a pharmacist/pharmacy student	10 (76.92)

- 30% of participants had never worked with a pharmacist or pharmacy student before the brigade.
- 100% of participants view the role of a pharmacist more positively after the brigade.
- 84% of participants strongly agreed that their opinion of pharmacy as a profession was changed in a positive way.

Results

Most useful pharmacy service

- On a scale of 1 to 6 (1 being the most useful and 6 being the least useful [or had the least amount of experience with]), participants ranked the following pharmacy services as most useful:



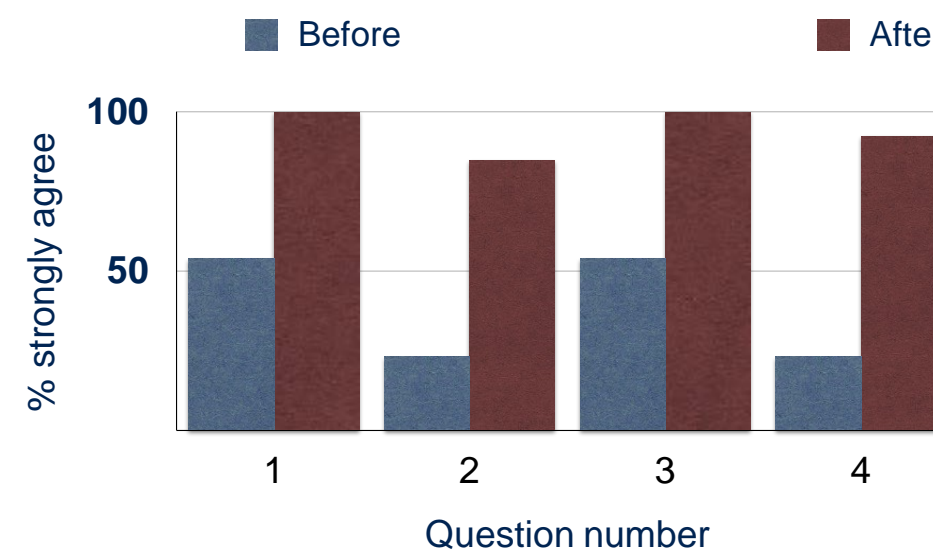
Participants' comments

- "I did not realize the necessity of the pharmacist in the medical setting until this brigade".
- "...really changed my viewpoint...They are an incredibly valued member of any medical team".
- "I greatly appreciate the attention to detail".
- "I gained a greater understanding of all the aspects pharmacists are involved in".

Conclusions/Discussion

- Incorporation of pharmacy students and a pharmacist as part of an international, interdisciplinary medical brigade improved attitudes and opinions towards the pharmacy profession, working as part of a medical team, and likelihood of referring questions to pharmacists in the future.
- Most responses came from practicing medical professionals or pre-medical students, an important population to analyze.
- Limitations included: analysis of a single medical brigade trip to Guatemala and recall bias (survey was administered after the trip only).
- Preliminary results of this project provide evidence of the potential roles and opportunities for pharmacists in global health initiatives. Involvement in such will continue to enhance the perception of pharmacy as a profession.

Agreement before and after the brigade



1. I appreciate the importance of working as a team to carry out the goals and activities of a medical brigade.
2. I am better prepared to work as part of a team.
3. Pharmacists are an important part of the medical team.
4. I am likely to refer a drug-related question to a pharmacist/pharmacy student in the future.

Disclosures

- The authors of this presentation have no disclosures concerning possible financial or personal relationships with commercial entities that may have a direct or indirect interest in the subject matter of this presentation.

