

Global health programs in medical school: Who benefits?

SEP 18, 2019

Staff News Writer

There is a great deal of institutional interest among health professions students in joining global health programs, with more than 25% having participated during their training. Health professions schools offer global health “immersion” learning opportunities in poor countries, which reinforces a student’s sense of calling while also fostering cross-cultural sensitivity. However, when programs rely on short-term fixes to long-standing infrastructure and resource deficits, some of the world’s most vulnerable, poor patients can be exploited.

The September issue of the *AMA Journal of Ethics*® (@JournalofEthics) features numerous perspectives on ethics of global health “immersion” in health professions education and gives you an opportunity to earn CME credit.

Articles include:

“Who Is Served Best by Health Professions Service Learning Trips?” If not planned and executed thoughtfully, “immersions” might not provide much benefit to communities they seek to serve.

“How Should We Decide Whether and When Some Care Is Better Than No Care?” Single-procedure interventions with minimal follow-up and clear quality-of-life gain are well suited for surgical mission trips. But not all risks and benefits are easily assessed.

“Facilitating Critical Self-Exploration by Global Health Students.” Awareness of one’s own interests is critical to successfully engaging in global health immersions.

“How Should Schools Respond to Learners’ Demands for Global Health Training?” In the past decade, more students than ever entered medical school with the desire, if not the expectation, of participating in meaningful global health experiences.

Listen and learn

In the journal's September podcast, experts from Concern America—Executive Director John Straw and Field Program Director Cat Quinn—discuss how global health outreach programs can be both sustainable and educational. Listen to previous episodes of the podcast, “Ethics Talk,” or subscribe in iTunes or other services.

Earn CME?

The *AMA Journal of Ethics* CME module, “How the Social Contract Can Frame International Electives” is designated by the AMA for a maximum of 1 *AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™*.

The module is part of the *AMA EdHub™*, an online platform that brings together high-quality CME, maintenance of certification, and educational content—in one place—with relevant learning activities, automated credit tracking and reporting for some states and specialty boards.

Learn more about *AMA* CME accreditation.

Submit manuscripts and artwork

The journal's editorial focus is on commentaries and articles that offer practical advice and insights for medical students and physicians. Submit a manuscript for publication. The journal also invites original photographs, graphics, cartoons, drawings and paintings that explore the ethical dimensions of health or health care.

The *AMA Journal of Ethics* John Conley Art of Medicine Contest and John John Conley Ethics Essay Contest for U.S.-based medical students, residents, and fellows are now open.

A look ahead

Upcoming issues of the *AMA Journal of Ethics* will focus on insights on value and values from decision science for clinical ethics, and ethics of assessing quality of life in reconstructive transplantation. Sign up to receive email alerts when new issues are published.