

The Cleveland-Cusco Connection: Establishing an International Virtual Global Health Education Partnership



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Introduction

- The Peru Health Outreach Project (PHOP) is a student-run global health project that conducts annual health fairs in Peru
- The 2020 PHOP trip was cancelled due to COVID-19
- A virtual elective was created to provide a global health opportunity for students from CWRU and Universidad Nacional San Antonio Abad del Cusco (UNSAAC)
- Prior virtual global health education partnerships have used synchronous and asynchronous platforms and found that common barriers include language, technological difficulties, and lack of course credit¹⁻³
- Cleveland-Cusco Connection (CCC) is an elective held over Zoom that aims to promote medical foreign language skills, clinical reasoning, international collaboration, and perspectives in global health
- 30 medical students from the U.S. and Peru participated, as well as physician, resident, and fellow facilitators
- CWRU students were M1s and M2s, UNSAAC students were 3rd-7th year students
- Consists of 6 monthly 1.5 hour-long sessions covering various healthcare topics
- All students took turns leading a session and presenting
- Sessions are a mix of student presentations and small group discussions
- Students were assigned pre-session readings and completed 2 reflective writing assignments

Session Topics

- Diabetes management using a patient case
- Healthcare systems in the US and Peru
- Healthcare workforce in the US and Peru
- Barriers to care in the US and Peru
- Public health programs in the US and Peru
- COVID-19 in the US and Peru



Methods

- Pre- and post-course surveys were collected and feedback was gathered regularly throughout the course using post-session feedback surveys (available in Spanish and English)
- Based on monthly feedback, small changes were implemented in the elective structure/planning

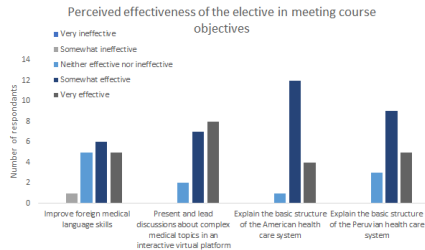
Results

Preliminary results of post-course survey:

Table 1. Post-course respondent characteristics

Characteristic	Number of respondents (%)
Gender	
Female	10 (59%)
Male	7 (41%)
Language ability	
Knows and understands scattered words	1 (6%)
Able to use simple phrases, but limited understanding	3 (18%)
Able to have simple dialogue using full sentences	5 (29%)
Able to have a conversation with past, present, and future conjugations	6 (35%)
Native fluency	2 (12%)

"[This was] one of the best experiences in my medical training" -UNSAAC student



"The most valuable part... was being able to work with Peruvian students in a small group setting to help work on my language and communication skills." -CWRU student

- Challenges participants encountered: language (59%), tired from other coursework (29%), too much pre-work (24%), internet problems (18%), conflict with time (12%)

Discussion

Strengths

- Promoting student autonomy in determining session topics
- Meaningful small group discussions
- Modifying content and structure of each session based on interest and student feedback

Challenges

- Unbalanced language proficiencies among participants
- Challenges coordinating meeting times
- Only the US medical students were able to receive course credit due to administrative barriers

Conclusions

- Virtual electives can provide global health educational opportunities that benefit students from high-income and low- and middle-income countries
- Further feedback is being collected and will inform the structure and content of next year's elective
- Potential improvements include obtaining faculty mentorship from both institutions and improving balance of languages spoken during sessions

References

1. Fallerois de Mello D, Larcher Caliri MH, Villela Mamede F, Fernandes de Aguiar Tonetto EM, Resop Reilly J. An Innovative Exchange Model for Global and Community Health Nursing Education. *Nurse Educ.* 2018 May/June;43(3):E1-E4. doi: 10.1097/NNE.0000000000000454. PMID: 28991; 2. Keynejad, R., Ali, F.R., Finlayson, A.E.T. et al. Telemedicine for Peer-to-Peer Psychiatry Learning Between U.K. and Somaliland Medical Students. *Acad Psychiatry* 37, 182–186 (2013). <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.ap.11080148031>; 3. Toddhunter F, Hallawell B, Pittaway D. Implementing a Virtual Exchange Project for student nurses in Queensland and Nottingham. *Nurse Educ Pract.* 2013 Sep;13(5):371-6. doi: 10.1016/j.nepr.2012.10.007. Epub 2012 Nov 13. PMID: 23153635.