

Exploring Factors Related to Physician Assistant Student Involvement in International Medical Missions

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**Making A
Global
Difference,**
One patient at a time



INTRODUCTION

Medical professionals have the ability and desire to improve the healthcare of underserved populations worldwide. Practitioners have developed various organizations to relieve global healthcare discrepancies, which have provided unique opportunities for healthcare students to participate in mission work. In order to continue making forward progress in the medical mission field, defining the factors that encourage student participation is a worthwhile query. Currently, there is no existing research on physician assistant (PA) student involvement in international medical missions.

METHODS

A survey was distributed to all 154 of the Physician Assistant program directors at the Accreditation Review Commission on Physician Assistant Education (ARC-PA) programs to collect data on their students' participation in international medical mission work and the factors that may be influencing them.

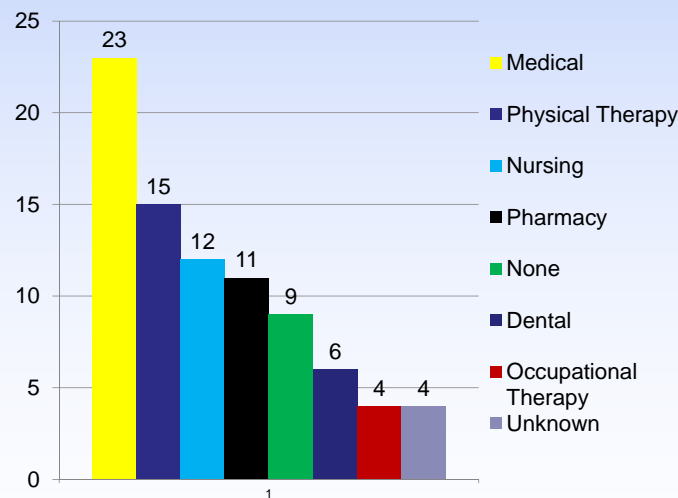
n=programs responding	98
% of total programs	64%
Programs with student participation	Yes 48% (47)
Programs without student participation	No 51.5% (51)

RESULTS

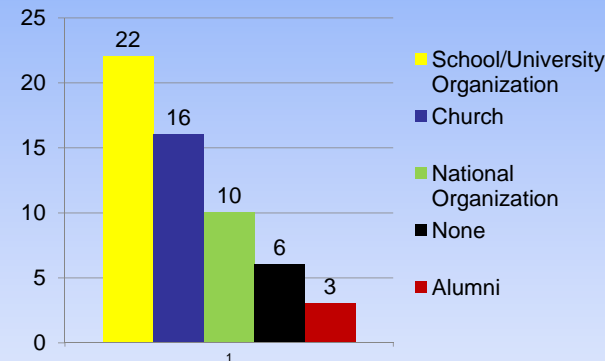
Ninety-eight programs participated in the survey for a 64% response rate of which 47 programs (48%) reported students involved in international medical missions. The described data of the 47 respondents indicate involvement with international medical missions reflect an affiliation with another organization, hosting speakers to promote mission work, participation in fundraising, and student acknowledgment at graduation or through academic credit.

Carnegie Classification	Missions	No participation
Academic Health Institution	38%	14%
University	40%	64%
College	13%	14%
Community College	6%	8%

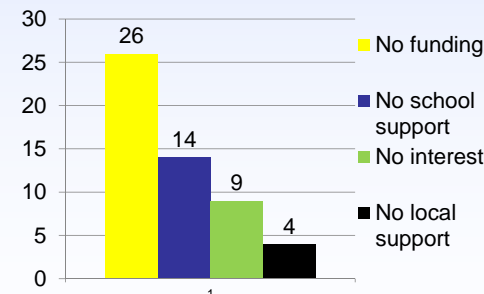
What other health professional students participate in medical mission trips with students from your program?



With which of the following organization(s) does your school affiliate regarding mission work? (check which ones apply)



Programs without student participation in medical missions: please indicate the reason



CONCLUSIONS

The respondent population of program directors represents similar program demographics as the non-respondent programs. Almost half of the responding program directors report some PA student involvement with international medical missions. The PA students are engaged in these medical missions with a plethora of organizations and interface with an interprofessional group of student healthcare professionals. The study demonstrates that a large proportion of PA students are engaged in international medical missions with the support and/or acknowledgement of the program administration.

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