

DEBRIEFING TRAINEES AFTER GLOBAL HEALTH EXPERIENCES: AN EXPERT CONSENSUS DELPHI STUDY

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Background: Global health (GH) opportunities in pediatric residency training are prevalent, with over half of U.S. pediatric residency programs offering electives in global health. Debriefing of trainees after their return from a GH experience is a potential tool to optimize educational processing, identify post-return stressors, and facilitate coping; however, there are no consensus recommendations for debriefing in this context, and practices are variable across institutions. Our objective was to develop structure and content guidelines for standardized debriefing of residents returning from short-term clinical GH rotations abroad.

Materials/Methods: Through a modified Delphi methodology involving serial survey questionnaires, we developed a standardized consensus-based debriefing tool. 11 pediatric global health education experts from institutions across the United States were recruited as panelists. Experts were identified as individuals with leadership experience in GH education who have demonstrated academic engagement in the field through either primary or senior authorship of a publication or presentation at a national or international conference. The Expert Panel (EP) completed four rounds of iterative surveys that were amended after each round based on qualitative data. In the final round, the EP was asked to rate each recommendation statement in level of importance from “not important” to “essential” using a 4-point Likert scale. Qualitative data and representative quotations were collected throughout.

Results: 9 of the 11 expert panelists completed all 4 rounds of our Delphi study. The EP achieved consensus that residents should complete post-return debriefing and rated the importance of 32 consensus statements regarding the debriefing process. Among the statement recommendations deemed to be “essential” were those that emphasized a focus on trainee well-being and coping skills and those that identified a need to provide mental health support and resources for trainees with significant emotional or psychological distress. The majority of respondents identified an additional 15 debriefing recommendation statements as at least “very important.”

Conclusions: According to GH education experts, all residents who participate in GH experiences abroad should participate in a structured debrief upon return. A set of 32 guideline recommendations regarding content, timing, structure, and actions related to post-return debriefing have been formulated according to expert panel consensus.

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