

A Review of Best Practices to Prepare Medical Students for Responsible Global Health Experiences

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BACKGROUND

- There is an increasing interest in medical students participating in short-term global health experiences and international electives, and as such programs are gradually becoming more established at several medical schools
- It has been shown that such experiences have a positive and lasting impact on civic engagement, philanthropy, knowledge production, and social entrepreneurship
- There is a striking need to establish the “best practices” for students to have responsible global health experiences, and several have called for the need to have standardized ethical training for the students with an added component of cultural sensitivity and clinical skills
- It is imperative to encourage these new and rising global health programs to train their students effectively to enrich their own experiences and enhance the relationships with hosting institutions

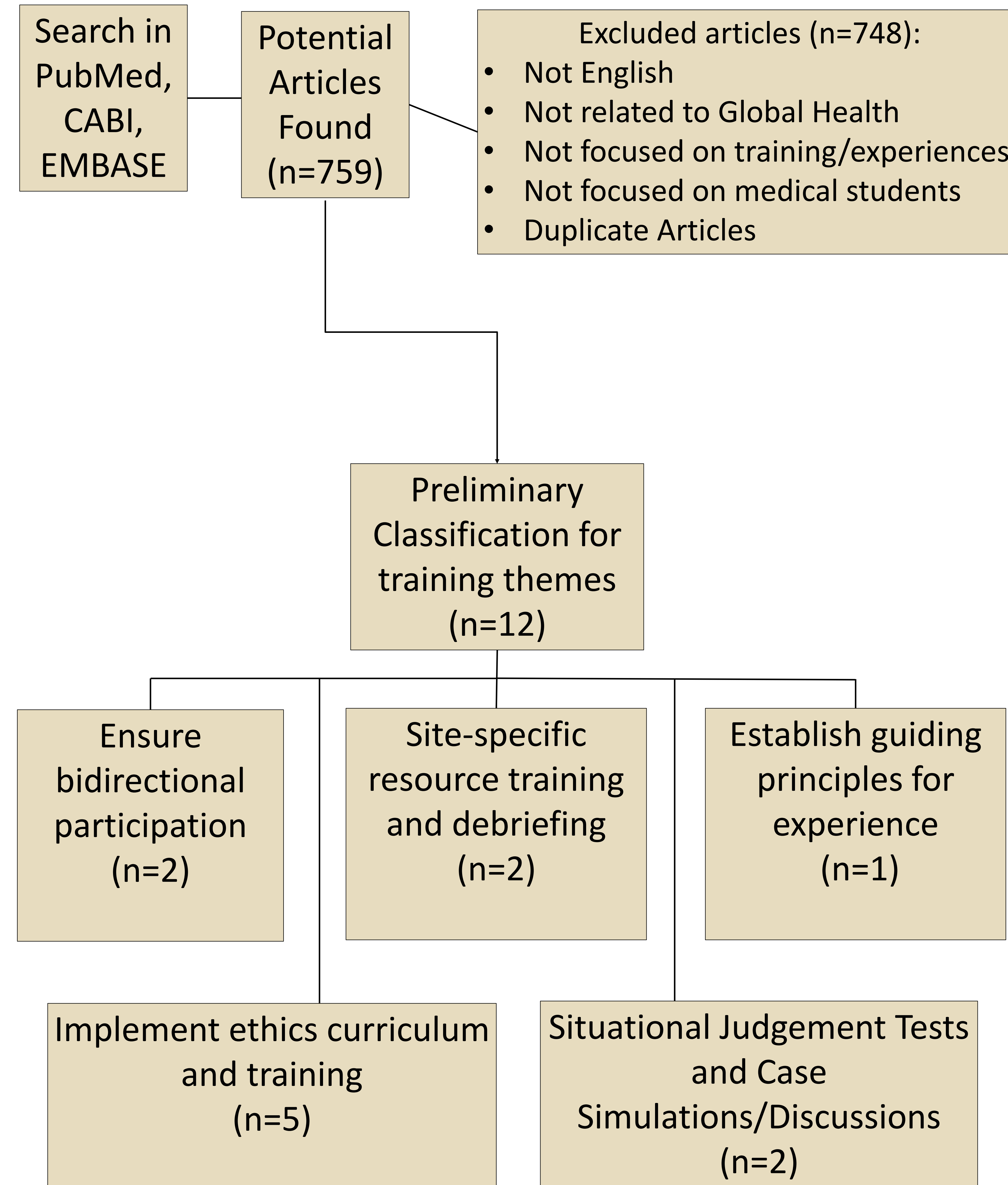
OBJECTIVES

- To comprehensively review and evaluate the existing literature regarding the current best practices of training medical students for global health experiences
- To identify themes of these best practices consolidated into one area for existing and future global health programs to utilize when planning their own experiences.

METHODS

- The authors performed a systematic review of PubMed, CABI, EMBASE. We collaborated with library scientists to focus and narrow down our MESH terms and keywords to isolate articles on training/preparation practices for global health experiences.
- Keywords and MESH terms included everything within the search topic: preparation of medical students for short-term global health experiences
 - Search Terms: “medical students”, “global health experiences”, “global health”, “training”, “ethics”
- A total of 759 articles were found, and exclusion criteria included the article not being in English, the topic of the search was not regarding training practices or having to do with global health education but not specifically international experiences/electives.
- Studies were included in the review if they explored preparation practices of students either through established curricula, involvement of host institutions for global health electives, or suggested models and guidelines for such practices. 12 articles were selected for final review.

RESULTS



LIMITATIONS

This search only utilized published papers regarding best practices of training global health students. There are likely many other established global health programs, experiences, and international electives that have not had their preparation practices published. This review is aimed towards programs that are seeking to create or improve an existing global health experience in an ethically responsible manner.

DISCUSSION

- Host entities should also be heavily involved in creating the SJT’s that best reflect their practice environments – this prevents unsustainable “unilateral aid”
- An ethical curriculum and situational judgement test specific to each elective is the most impactful practice in leading to a responsible experience for the student
 - Crump et al.** – established ethics guidelines tailored to sending/host institutions, trainees, and sponsors
 - DeCamp et al.** – created introductory curriculum on website with 10 case vignettes
- Establishment of proper pre-departure training and post-return debriefing with an input of local hosts in the selection process and needs assessment
 - Purkey et al.** – student focus groups which developed consensus on best themes to explore in pre-departure training and post-return debriefing, including discussions with cultural experts (pre-departure) and knowledge translation for future advocacy (post-return)
- Case simulations and discussions specific to site
 - Bertelsen et al.** – created 4-week clinical clerkship in which students rated case discussions to be most impactful for their preparedness
 - Asao et al.** – created 10-minute ethical simulations which significantly strengthened students’ strategies for specific ethical issues
- “Essential” student competencies include training in clinical research, health disparities, and the global burden of disease
- Satterfield et al.** suggests employing multiple-mini interviews with specific cases as a pre-screening tool and employing case simulations and discussions in the pre-departure training
- Situational Judgment Tests (SJT’s) and case discussions were extremely well received and evaluated by students, who called it the most impactful part of their training

FURTHER DIRECTIONS

- Implement these identified preparation practices into an existing or novel international health elective/program
- Employ SJTs as both a training method and selection tool for medical students
- Evaluate its efficacy for both medical students and the host institutions and adjust preparation practices as necessary

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