

ABSTRACT

Objective(s):

Over 5 billion people lack access to cardiac surgical care, disproportionately in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). The emerging literature demonstrates high interest in global surgery across specialties. However, participation in global cardiac surgical care remains low. To date, there has been no research quantifying the attitudes of cardiothoracic surgeons about global surgery. Our study aimed to acquire a broader understanding of cardiothoracic surgical trainees' interest in global surgery to address barriers and promote cardiac healthcare worldwide.

Methods:

An online survey was sent to all North American cardiothoracic surgical residents via the Thoracic Surgery Residents Association (TSRA) email listserv. The survey was designed in the REDCap database and administered twice in 2021 and 2022. Data were analyzed via STATA by descriptive and Chi-Square analysis.

Results:

73 cardiothoracic surgical trainees responded to our survey. 95.3% of respondents considered increasing cardiothoracic surgical access as important and 67.2% indicated this to be a future career priority. 82.8% of respondents would participate in global surgery if opportunities were available through their home institution. Lack of opportunities (70.0%) and finances (66.7%) were the primary barriers to participation. Respondents identified funding (85%) and institutional support (83.3%) as the most significant incentives to increase involvement.

Conclusions:

There is strong interest in global surgery among cardiothoracic trainees; however, involvement remains low. A consensus among the North American cardiothoracic surgical community is needed to address barriers to global volunteerism within surgical residency and improve access to cardiac surgery worldwide.