Supportive Role for Basic Science Faculty During an Osteopathic Medical Outreach Experience
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Abstract
At the Alabama College of Osteopathic Medicine (ACOM), where its inaugural class started in the fall of 2013, two basic science faculty participated with medical students in a week long osteopathic medical outreach trip to Imbabura, Ecuador in the summer of 2015. Here we report on the challenges that presented in the search for available clinical faculty to participate in this activity and the resulting opportunity for basic science faculty to serve as facilitators during the outreach program. Eleven students and two basic science faculty chaperones completed this program in coordination with a local physician located in Imbabura, Ecuador. The faculty shared the shadowing experiences with the students at different regional rural clinics and hospitals. The participation of ACOM basic science faculty chaperones led to numerous educational opportunities and positive experiences for both students and faculty involved.

Introduction
There is a growing interest in global health and short-term experiences in global health among medical students [1], as it has been suggested that these experiences provide significant opportunities for educational growth and may be necessary for preparing globally engaged physicians. For example a major benefit of global health experiences for medical students is the opportunity to see examples of serious chronic health issues in underserved populations with limited access to health care. This experience can serve as a model for becoming primary care physicians in rural areas of the United States. A recent article in The Chronicle of Higher Education expressed concern that students with little experience are allowed to participate in procedures in foreign clinics, jeopardizing the welfare of both the patient and students [2]. At ACOM we designed an osteopathic medical outreach program for medical students who were interested in gaining practical experience in international medicine, and we recruited basic science faculty to supervise. We report here the success of basic science faculty in a supportive role during the osteopathic medical outreach.

Objectives
1. To examine the supportive role of basic science faculty supervisors.
2. To discuss the challenges in recruiting clinical faculty for this educational experience.
3. To identify the strengths of involving basic science faculty.

Methods
• We designed a week long osteopathic outreach trip to Imbabura, Ecuador in collaboration with a local physician. An orientation manual was provided to the participants to prepare them for the local conditions and customs.
• Activities involved observing local physicians in various underserved towns in the province of Imbabura, Ecuador.
• ACOM faculty accompanied students to the clinics and hospitals at all times.
• The students had either completed 1 or 2 years of medical education and were only allowed to shadow physicians, not participate in medical procedures.
• Patients were given the option to decline student presence, and privacy was respected at all times.
• After completion of trip, the students were surveyed on the experience as a whole.

Results

| Table 1: Were there sufficient opportunities to observe patient care/procedures at the level needed in order to learn from trip? |
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| Answer | Bar | Response | % |
| Yes | | 10 | 91% |
| No | | 2 | 18% |

Conclusions
• Advocates have called for increased attention to social medicine and global health, as each year more U.S. medical students participate in global health experiences [3].
• At the Alabama College of Osteopathic Medicine, a new medical school which opened its doors in 2013 [4], we are creating opportunities for our students to engage in diverse global health experiences.
• Clinicians often are not available to participate in osteopathic medical outreach trips because they have patient appointments which makes it difficult for them to coordinate extended time off.
• Clinicians expressed willingness to travel with students to complete the osteopathic medical outreach, but there was not financial incentive for them to participate. A week away from the clinics is a substantial financial loss.
• Basic science faculty were able to supervise the students while they shadowed various clinics and to ensure that professional behavior was displayed at all times by the students.
• It brought a sense of security to the medical students knowing that faculty were present.
• Most students were satisfied with the experience; some were disappointed about lack of hands-on patient care.
• Participating basic science faculty can contribute to the instruction of global health in a preclinical curriculum by working directly with the students during osteopathic medical outreach experiences.
• This trip was mostly focused on international medicine and culture exposure.
• The students funded their participation in the trip.
• Local physicians were exposed to osteopathic medicine and appreciated the supportive role faculty who accompany the students.

References

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