

Medical Student Enrichment  
Programs: International Programs  
and Career Advising

Michael G. Kavan, Ph.D.

Creighton University School of  
Medicine

# International Health

- Former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright has called on medicine to fight against AIDS and other diseases throughout the world.
- USHHS Secretary Michael O. Leavitt called for medicine to focus efforts on the potential avian flu pandemic in the world
- Former AAMC President Jordan Cohen stressed academic medicine's international outreach
- Harvard's N. Lynn Eckhert emphasized the importance of the next generation of physicians becoming "informed health care leaders who take on the global burden of disease."

# 2007 News Headlines

- Pollution blamed for China's cancer rise
  - Contaminated air and water getting worse, health experts say
- Deadly dengue fever surging in Mexico
  - Mosquito-control teams dispatched to springtime tourist areas
- Russia warns AIDS epidemic is worsening
  - As many as 1.3 million infected; HIV spreading into heterosexual population
- Louisiana doctor treats Darfur victims
  - Doctors Without Borders volunteer makes a difference every day

# International Experiences

- *2006 Matriculating Student Questionnaire*
  - 40.7% of students indicated that they had traveled abroad *prior to* medical school
  - 2.4% of students stated that they planned to practice in a foreign country

# International Experiences

- *AAMC Graduation Questionnaire*
  - Students participating in an international health experience (elective or volunteer)
    - 27.2% in 2006
    - 25.7% in 2007 (Preliminary Report)

# The Creighton Experience

- On average, 56 (45%) of students participate in international electives
- Options include:
  - Summer following M1 year
  - M4 electives
  - Extension of Curriculum

# Summer Following M1 Year

- Formal international program
  - Project CURA (CreightonMed United in Relief Assistance)
  - 4-week program
  - India, Peru, Kenya, Cambodia, Romania plus more local area opportunities
  - Close cooperation with International Programs Office
  - Credit, but not applied to graduation requirements

# M4 Electives

- Formal Interdisciplinary health program
- Institute for Latin American Concern
  - Dominican Republic
  - Over summer and into first 4-week elective block
  - Formal academic credit
- Additional international electives developed in DR, Peru, and Kenya
  - Expansion of ILAC and Project CURA

# Extension of Curriculum

- A few students each year take an official LOA to participate in international experiences that are not part of our formal program
- These are typically experiences that involve work with medical or non-medical agencies without appropriate supervisory guarantees; thus, they are not for credit
- If brief (no longer than two months), we work with students to make up this time prior during M4 year and prior to residency training

# International Experiences and their Impact on Careers - Pearls

- Encourage international experiences
- Flexibility of scheduling allows most students to complete their medical education on time
- International programs and career advising
  - Key is reflection related to career and life goals
    - Daily log, CiM Summer Reflections tool, etc.
    - Talk to others
  - Match students with faculty/community mentors who have similar experiences and interests
  - Assist students to incorporate their interests into their specialty selection
  - Suggest students research residency programs' willingness to allow international elective opportunities