

Reflections on Nursing Students' Global Health Experience in San Eduardo, Ecuador
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Background

Over the last twenty-five years, the Center for Contemplative Justice has built a strong relationship with Escuela Ann Stevens and the small rural community of San Eduardo, Ecuador. This relationship has grown over the years to include annual visits providing preventative healthcare education and capital improvement projects to benefit the community. Since 2008, students and faculty from Vanderbilt University School of Nursing (VUSN) have been involved in providing a two-day medical clinic to benefit the community. This year, four VUSN students and one faculty are traveling to San Eduardo over spring break. The students will be able to implement on site activities as an extension to projects that have been completed by previous students virtually during the pandemic. In addition, onsite information will be collected to provide sustainability and guide future projects.

Methods

During the five days living and working on site the students will present a puberty education curriculum to the teachers, teach cardiopulmonary resuscitation to community members, and host a one-day preventive health fair. Additionally, the students developed and plan to conduct a follow-up Community Needs Assessment Survey to gather updated data to better understand the health perceptions of the community with regards to their healthcare access and education. The survey will be distributed via Redcap to the parents during the health fair and door to door in the community with the use of local interpreters. Upon return, data analysis will be completed, and the results of this Quality Improvement project shared.

Results

Preliminary survey results will be available post travel. Students will also share their individual travel experiences and reflections on participation in this global health experience. This information will be of interest to those participants who participate in global health research and quality improvement projects or wish to travel in the future.

Conclusions

Due to COVID-19, the group has not been able to travel for the past three years, and a lot has changed within the community. These changes have reinforced the need to have a new assessment completed to identify the needs and perceived gaps to guide future projects to improve the health and well-being of the community. Also, follow up to previous projects will receive the follow up needed. This presentation will describe the work that was completed during this trip and provide student insight and reflections on their global health experience.