

International Anesthesia Training Develops ACGME Competencies While Encouraging Participation in International Healthcare Service

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Learner Audience: Anesthesiology Faculty, Residents and Fellows

Background: International medical missions provide extraordinary training opportunities for residents, particularly in the ACGME competencies concerning professionalism, cultural diversity, and interpersonal and communication skills. In addition, voluntary participation by anesthesiologists on such missions is essential for the provision of safe and effective perioperative care and is encouraged by philanthropic and religious organizations as well as professional societies and educational institutions.

Needs Assessment: Many current residents, faculty members, and residency program applicants have prior experience and express strong interest in participating in international healthcare missions.

Hypothesis: International anesthesia training immerses residents in a foreign culture, dramatically demonstrating the importance of competence in cultural diversity and effective interpersonal and communication skills, while also encouraging fundamental principles of professionalism.

Curriculum Design: The Vanderbilt International Anesthesia (VIA) clinical rotation provides an extraordinary opportunity for residents to develop ACGME competencies while training in an international medical environment. The VIA program, under the direction of faculty members with extensive experience in international service, currently offers clinical rotations ranging from two to four weeks in Guatemala, Nigeria and Kenya. Vanderbilt faculty members supervise and teach residents at VIA sites. This experience expands residents' awareness and understanding of cultural diversity, improving their ability to function in culturally diverse environments. Working in hospitals with limited resources challenges residents' preexisting expectations and priorities, often leading to greater appreciation and better utilization of healthcare resources upon returning home. Residents share their expertise both as practitioners and teachers, thereby, enjoying the personal gratification of service to patients as well as students. Furthermore, residents learn perioperative patient care and management of anesthesia in a resource poor environment, commonly caring for patients with advanced diseases.

Outcome: Resident interest will be assessed by incidence of participation during residency followed by subsequent participation in international service missions after graduation. Standard residency program evaluation instruments are used to assess the clinical rotation as well as resident and faculty performance.