



MEDICAL EDUCATION  
SCHOLARSHIP CENTRE

## Medical Education Scholarship Forum Proceedings

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### **Insight: Integrating social determinants into a pre-clerkship international global health program**

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**Objectives:** Medical students in Canada are increasingly interested in opportunities to gain knowledge and experience in international settings as part of their training. However, much of the emphasis is on clinical skills opportunities with less emphasis on the social, political, structural, and environmental influences on health and illness. The importance of advocating for solutions to health inequity can be lost in the intensity of the biomedical experience. In order to consolidate awareness of the community challenges and social determinants of health in low resource contexts, Memorial University has developed an integrated clinical and social science program aimed at students in the pre-clerkship years. **Methods:** The program offers a four-week combined clinical, course work and community site-visit approach. Working in conjunction with the Patan Academy of Health Sciences (PAHS), the MUN International Summer Institute for Global Health Training (InSIGHT) program provides students with observerships mentored by local Nepali medical faculty. In addition, students visit community service providers, attend seminars open to all students and faculty at PAHS, produce a visual project that can be used to facilitate advocacy on global health issues, and engage in reflection and case presentations to integrate lessons learned. **Outcomes:** A preliminary program evaluation showed high student endorsement of the integrated clinical and social medical curriculum model as a means of increasing awareness of global health issues and the potential for advocacy. Students reported an increased awareness of the social determinants of health and an understanding of the role of local social and cultural conditions in shaping accessibility and equity in health care. The program also resulted in a successful collaboration between medical schools in two geographically and culturally distinct locations but with shared values and common interests in training students to work in underserved areas. Respect for and collaboration with international partners and colleagues are reinforced at all levels of the program. **Conclusion:** InSIGHT offers an alternative elective that seeks to overcome the imbalance in educational resource allocation in low income countries where students from high income countries undertake training opportunities.