

THE EVALUATION OF MEDICAL STUDENT INTERNATIONAL MISSION TRIPS:
A RAPID REVIEW. AM Kamel, (M.D., SOM), University of Colorado School of Medicine,
Denver, CO.

BACKGROUND: Previous reviews of the literature on medical mission trips have noted that there is a dearth of rigorous data collection and evaluation of the efficacy of medical missions to low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). Medical students are increasingly participating in these trips as global health curriculums become more popular and prevalent, and the literature about these international experiences has not been well-described. This rapid review aims to characterize the evaluation of medical mission trips for medical students to LMICs.

METHODS: This article is a rapid review of the literature using PRISMA guidelines to search PubMed for studies about the evaluation of medical mission trips involving medical students. Results were sorted using inclusion and exclusion criteria to select studies for qualitative synthesis.

RESULTS: 19 articles were selected for inclusion in the qualitative synthesis. 47.4% evaluated only medical students, 31.6% evaluated a mix of medical trainees and clinicians, and 21% evaluated host clinicians and coordinators rather than students. 41.2% of included studies used pre- and post-experience surveys, 15.8% used only post-experience surveys, and 36.8% used semi-structured interviews. One study tested knowledge. Outcomes measured varied considerably, but often evaluated student and host perceptions and opinions of medical missions, ethical concerns, and international health care.

CONCLUSIONS: Studies evaluating medical missions for medical students reflect issues in the broader medical mission trip literature. Qualitative analysis and evaluation of student perceptions and opinions are disproportionately represented, and there is a deficiency of quantitative data collection. This review also demonstrates a lack of rigorous evaluation of outcomes for host countries and clinical outcomes for the patients MMTs treat.