
Letter to the Editors

Global health training is not only a developed-country duty

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To define global health is a challenge, to improve it a greater one. A broad definition of *global health* is given by the United States Institute of Medicine as ‘health problems, issues, and concerns that transcend national boundaries, may be influenced by circumstances or experiences in other countries, and are best addressed by cooperative actions and solutions.’¹ Training health professionals in global health is an important piece, undertaken largely at universities and institutions in developed countries, as MacFarlane *et al* nicely described it in the December 2008 issue.²

However, little is known about experiences in developing countries, and these are frequently, if not always, ignored in reviews of the subject.³ The objective of this letter is to briefly describe an interdisciplinary training program in global health based in Peru.

Our team of researchers and clinicians at the Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia (UPCH), in Lima, Peru, and a network of local and international collaborators have long recognized that infectious diseases’ research training needs to be hands-on and conducted in the context where global health challenges are encountered – enabling realistic evaluation and problem solving.⁴

In fact, the Gorgas International Course, one of the most reputed Tropical Medicine Diploma courses in the world, has a very descriptive motto: ‘Teaching tropical medicine in the tropics.’ A similar concept influenced other global health programs located in developing countries such as Peru.

The Global Health Peru Program (<http://www.globalhealthperu.org>) is an innovative training and research program in global health developed at UPCH and funded by the Fogarty/NIH.⁵ Since 2005, the program has promoted research and training in global health. More than 500 students have been trained using a global health curriculum that includes multidisciplinary courses, conferences, seminars, and research opportunities for undergraduates and graduate students interested in global health issues.



Through small research awards in global health, for example, the program has supported interdisciplinary projects from students and researchers in the fields of tuberculosis, trichomoniasis, cysticercosis and Chagas disease. The program operates distance-learning programs using open-source tools (for example, Moodle) and it is working towards the development of a diploma degree in global health.

Training in global health is a crucial component in the global health agenda, and global health training programs for health-care workers in the developing world must not be ignored. They are needed to build a critical mass of people at the frontlines of global health problems.

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