

Global Health Ethics Seminar: Cases and Homework Assignment

Case 1

Maya is a student rotating on an infectious disease ward in Indonesia. In the first few days, she realizes that she is frequently left alone to care for patients, as there are few physicians available to supervise her. Maya is anxious, as she feels she is providing care beyond her capabilities, and brings these concerns to the Chief of Services, who explains, "This is the best training you could be getting in global health! We depend upon our foreign colleagues to help with short staffing."

1. How would you feel in this situation and what would you do?
2. Would your perspective change depending on the type of care required? (blood draws, Ips, prescribing medication?)
3. How could a situation like this be prevented?

Case 2

While in Honduras for a clinical rotation in a busy public hospital, Narae relies on the residents to explain patients to her because she is unfamiliar with conditions there. Although she had taken a course in Spanish in preparation for her rotation, Narae also requires frequent assistance from the staff with interpretation. One day Narae becomes frustrated when caring for a patient who has been waiting one week for the surgical team to debride her leg wound. Narae approaches the surgical resident to discuss the situation, and the conversation elevates to an argument. Narae asks the resident what the plan is if the patient cannot get a consultation. The resident becomes angry: "That's what's wrong with you people!" "You people?" Narae interrupts angrily. "What do you mean, 'you people'?" "I mean you visiting students! You come in here without knowing how things work, what the procedures are, and expect everyone to oblige you and translate for you. I have sixty patients to take care of and I'm already spending too much time talking about this one!"

1. This case considers perceptions towards medical students visiting from another country. How do you think Narae was perceived?
2. How do you think you will be perceived?
3. How will you anticipate and respond to this?
4. What do you think the balance will be between your contribution and what you take away from this experience?

Reference

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Assignment Questions for International Health Students

Site Research: Before you arrive at your site for your rotation, answer the questions below:

1. How does the national healthcare system differ from the healthcare delivery system in the United States?
2. What are the implications of the differences in the healthcare delivery systems?
3. Provide a brief (200 words) description of your Rotation Organization or Site (mission, population focus)

Develop a Multimedia resource guide to understanding the geopolitical, historical, socio-cultural, economic landscape of your chosen site. Please include at least:

- 2 books
- 1-2 blogs
- 2 TED talks or other web video presentations
- 2 newspaper articles
- 2 journal articles
- 2 films
- 2 websites
- one other relevant resource

Questions for Students Prior to Global Health Work

1. What are the benefits and who will receive them, and what are the costs, and who will bear them?
2. In the context of very limited resources for global health needs, is your elective justified? What exists close-by?
3. Where are the weaknesses in your plan, specifically?
4. Is the work feasible, cost-effective, necessary, focused, and justified?
5. Will it work to undermine disparity, or actually contribute to it? Will there be a net benefit to the community?
6. What do you hope to bring back to your community, and whom will you share it with?
7. Is your work sustainable, and if not, will this leave a negative impact?