

ABSTRACT

Medical students have limited exposure to field epidemiology, even though will assume public health roles after graduation. We established a 10-week elective in field epidemiology during medical school. Students attended one-week didactic sessions on epidemiology, and nine weeks in field placement sites. We administered pre- and post-tests to evaluate the training. We enrolled 34 students in 2011 and 2012. In 2011, we enrolled five of 24 applicants from a class of 280 medical students. In 2012, we enrolled 18 of 81 applicants from a class of 360 students; plus 11 who participated in the didactic sessions only. Among the 34 students who completed the didactic sessions, 74% were male, and their median age was 24years (range: 22-26). The median pre-test score was 64% (range: 47-88%) and the median post-test score was 82% (range: 72-100%). Successful completion of the field projects was 100%. Six (30%) students were not aware of public health as a career option before this elective, 56% rated the field experience as outstanding, and 100% reported it increased their understanding of epidemiology. Implementing an elective in field epidemiology within the medical training is a highly acceptable strategy to increase awareness for public health among medical students.