Global Citizenship, Policy, and Culture
Pharmacy Student Experiences in an International Specialization Elective
Cheryl A. Sadowski, B.Sc.(Pharm), Pharm.D, 1 Cheryl Cox, B.S.P, 1 Marlene Guikert, B.Sc.(Pharm), 1 Lynette Shultz, Ph.D. 2
1. Faculty of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, University of Alberta, 2. Faculty of Education, University of Alberta

BACKGROUND
• The Pharmacy Program
  • A 5-year degree; curriculum modules are focused on pharmacy practice, therapeutics, pharmaceutical sciences.
  • The care process is primarily based on patient cases.
  • There is minimal content on policy, culture, or citizenship
  • In the final year in the program, 9-credits of specialization electives are required.
• The course
  • 3-credit specialization held in May in Italy
  • Calendar description: PHARM 453 Intercultural Exploration of Pharmacy and Health: This course explores the relationship between culture, diet, lifestyle and health in a Mediterranean environment. Students will examine factors that influence health, including the geo-political, socioeconomic, and cultural factors.
  • Activities: social/policy position paper, journal club, spa/clinic visits, patient care simulation with University of Naples students, critical reflection journals, debates

METHODS
• Exploratory qualitative study
• Inclusion: Students enrolled between 2011-2013
• Data collection: Semi-structured interviews
• Data analysis: Content analysis for themes
• Approval: Health Research Ethics Board, University of Alberta
• Theoretical Framework: Critical Citizenship Education1
  • Politics/ideology, social/collective, self/subj ectivity, praxis/engagement

OBJECTIVES
• To explore student experiences and learning related to pharmacy practice and global citizenship in a specialization 3 week elective course taught in Italy.

RESULTS
• N=3 participants, ages 22-24
• 4 identified this as their first international educational experience

DISCUSSION
• Students frequently focused on the health and social aspects of food, even though this was not the primary focus of the formal curriculum.
• Students reflected frequently on their gaps in knowledge and previous assumptions.

CONCLUSION
• This international course impacted students both professionally and personally.
• The setting and course focus on citizenship and culture allowed students to experience a dynamic and relevant course.

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...just the idea that it was so different from your drugs and therapeutics course, but it still related so much to your pharmacy practice, I really liked that. (PS1)

They said, “Where does your food from the supermarket come from?” And I just blanked. And I’m usually, typical pharmacist, we like to know things, we like to know details, we like to know it all, and I had no idea. (PS1)

In that sense, I could see why we needed to be in that environment to learn about the food, the appreciation of locally grown foods… (PS2)

The videos shown and the discussions we had… put a certain amount of guilt. You feel bad at the end. (PS2)

I felt that our class did a really good job of not really segregating anyone… we were actually willing to sit at other tables each night and kind of shared on that aspect… we did a really good job in that. (PS2)

We did quite a few research projects to find where certain products are sourced. It was eye-opening to see that based on our choices, we can really impact the food industries in different parts of the world. (PS3)

Learning to live as a group… getting to know the professors better, getting to know the family, so the relationships… that’s what I would take out of it the most. (PS2)

A sense of community…related to the assignments… going out to the market, picking out food… just communicating with the locals, and making a meal together. (PS4)

I had wished our own nutrition course was very similar to this and that all the students could have learned it in this manner as opposed to the biochemistry. (PS2)


Self and Engagement
Application
Professionalism
Personal/Self
Citizenship

...as a pharmacist and personally it helped me with anyone that I face, any patients that have language barriers. (PS1)

Learning that everyone does things differently and [in] westernized medicine we have our control trials and all this. And there they go to spas for prescriptions… depending on your patients … their cultures can affect their care.(PS1)

Without good food you cannot have good health… it is a band aid solution when you are giving people drugs for things that are caused by poor diet. (PS1)

This course definitely changed my view on [the right to food]. I’ve started to buy food in different ways, like from farmer’s markets, and thinking about where it came from. (PS3)

At the end of the day we are still health care professionals even though our job is to take care of health in our immediate patients, we can’t be ignoring other issues across the world, in terms of health care, health of others abroad. It’s interesting that I’ve never worked of volunteered, but I think it’s important to be aware of those issues. (PS4)

I’ve tried to make tiny changes on my own as a citizen, but I’m very much a [participant] in the globalization of food. I’ve tried to make tiny changes on my own as a citizen, but I’m very much a [participant] in the globalization of food. Which is the unfortunate truth of it. (PS2)

What I enjoyed most about the course was self-learning of myself. (PS2)

Right to food and education about food are the key to pharmacy because they are preventative. (PS3)

I think this might be where the disconnect in our profession comes from … here are your drugs, consult your nutritionist … we don’t take responsibility ourselves. (PS2)