Background

- Hurricane Maria made landfall in Puerto Rico on September 20, 2018 as a Category 4 hurricane, with winds 155 mph and bisecting the entire island.
- The energy grid was heavily damaged and almost 100% of the island was without power.
- The access to water, food and medications was limited.
- As of June, 2018, nine (9) months after the storm, there were still approximately eleven thousand people without electricity and many without homes.
- Many deaths have been reported, being the elderly people the most affected. The total number of fatalities are still in dispute.

Objectives

- Expose P1 students to the community health needs in Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria.
- Contribute to the improvement of community health through the implementation of primary care interventions.

Methods

- After Hurricane Maria and as part of the course FARM 7116: Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, P1 students visited two (2) disadvantaged communities in San Juan, Puerto Rico:
  - Centro Cultural de la Península de Cantera
  - Centro de Edad Avanzada Las Margaritas
- A faculty member coordinated the visits with the administrators of the community organizations.
- The students assessed and prioritized participants’ needs.
- Addressing the communities needs, students offered small educational talks, demonstrations and distributed written materials to the participants.

Assessed and Prioritized Needs

1. Water purification
2. Hygiene
3. Optimal use of food ingredients
4. Safe drug handling and storage
5. Disease prevention
6. Health promotion

Activities

- Water purification
- Hand washing and oral hygiene
- Recipe making: Hurricane Plate
- Exercise routine
- Stress management

Educational Talks

- Diabetes
- Dengue
- Zika
- Chikungunya
- Leptospirosis
- Safe drug handling and storage
- Nutrition

Materials

- Mi plato huracanado (My hurricane plate)
- ¿Cómo purificar el agua? (How to purify water?)
- Zika
- Leptospirosis
- Guía de ejercicios (Exercise guide)
- Receta para ensalada de granos (Grain salad recipe)
- First aid kit

Results

- Students made 8 interventions.
- Fifty five (55) elders and 45 children participated.
- Evaluations showed that the participants as well as the administrators of the organizations were very satisfied with the students’ interventions.

Implications

- P1 students implemented a primary care intervention addressing the immediate needs of a disadvantaged community.
- Students learned about community needs and their possibilities as future pharmacists to contribute to the quality of life of the people they serve when a devastating climatic event occurs.
- Students also learned how to proactively respond to future events.
- This content will be formally incorporated into the Doctor of Pharmacy curriculum.

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References