

it adsorbs most drugs and chemicals; (3) has few serious adverse effects or complications; and (4) can be made in a variety of forms, shapes, and textures. In the aftermath of the Chernobyl accident, >150,000 liquidators were exposed to radioactivity within the 30 km zone and >3 million residents have stayed in contaminated areas. This resulted in accumulation of radionuclides in the bodies of both groups of people. Patients suffering from radiation exposure and accumulation of radioactivity were treated successfully using oral adsorbents or, in severe cases, hemoperfusion.

**Keywords:** antidote; activated carbon; Chernobyl; radiation exposure; radioactivity

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## Oral Presentations—Topic 2: Education

### Session 1: Competencies 1

*Chairs: Geert Seynaeve; P. Hustinx*

#### Comprehensive Field-Based Training Program for Humanitarian Responders

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The Humanitarian Studies Initiative (HSI) is a multidisciplinary program designed for graduate students from Harvard, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Tufts University who have experience in humanitarian response. The program comprises weekly seminars that cover important topics pertaining to humanitarian operations, academic course work, a three-day simulation exercise, and a three-month field placement. The simulation exercise is an essential component of the HSI program. It consolidates students' knowledge and provides invaluable practical training that helps them to prepare for future work in a complex humanitarian emergency.

Humanitarian responders are faced with an overwhelming number of issues in the field. Although organizations involved in response conduct simulations to train and update their staff, most are restricted to the classroom and have narrow focus. This study presents a new, field-based training program in which participants encounter many of the issues they face as responders in a complex humanitarian emergency. Participants are grouped into non-governmental organization (NGO) teams and work together. They track the crisis on simulation websites prior to the three-day field mission. In the field, participants gather data and perform several tasks in a demanding environment, proceeding to the creation of their NGO final service delivery plan. The program provides participants with the opportunity to develop skills in planning, coordination, needs assessments, population counting, data analysis, report writing, media, public relations, conflict negotiation, international humanitarian law, human rights, disease control, nutrition, shelter, water, sanitation, and protection. By using this model for disaster simulations, organizations can

provide cost-effective, broad-based field training to further develop and enhance disaster response skills of their field staff.

**Keywords:** education; field-based training; humanitarian; responders; training

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#### The “Harvard Humanitarian Studies Initiative for Residents” Effectively Trains Doctors in Humanitarian Topics Prior to Field Deployment

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**Objective:** To determine whether a two-week intensive course is effective in training doctors in humanitarian skills prior to field deployment.

**Methods:** Thirteen of 19 doctors enrolled in the course completed a multiple-choice test before (pre-test) and after (post-test) the course. The 23-question pre-test covered topics including tropical medicine, humanitarian and human rights law, Sphere standards, epidemiology, malnutrition, and international aid agencies. The post-test contained 70 questions, 23 of which were identical to the pre-test questions, although the order of multiple-choice answers was changed. Scores were stratified by specialty type, MPH degree held or not, and total months of international health fieldwork.

**Results:** Of the 23 questions, the average score was 15.3 correct answers (67% correct) for the pre-test and 19.3 (84% correct) for the post-test. Pre- and post-test scores did not vary significantly by specialty type or Masters of Public Health (MPH) degree. The average pre-test scores correlated with months of prior field experience were: (1) no experience; test score = 12.0; (2) 2 weeks to 6 months experience; test score = 15.7; and (3) 7-12 months; test score = 16.25. Average post-test scores of those with 7-12 months experience were slightly higher (20.25) than those with no (19) or 2 weeks to 6 months (18.9) experience. The scores of all groups increased from the pre- to the post-test.

**Conclusions:** A comprehensive two-week course is effective in training doctors of all specialties in humanitarian principles and significantly increases pre-deployment capacity even in those with substantial field experience.

**Keywords:** education; field deployment; humanitarian; post-test; pre-deployment; pre-test

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#### Humanitarian Studies Initiative for Residents: An Innovative Program for Doctors in Training

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A new, multi-disciplinary program, called the Human Studies Initiative for Residents (HSIR), is being coordinated through Harvard Humanitarian Initiative (HHI) at Harvard School of Public Health. The program is based on participation from the multi-institutional residency training