

Regional Practicum Model for Pharmacy Experiential Education

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BACKGROUND

- Students in the four-year UBC Entry-to-Practice (E2P) Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD) program complete 44 weeks of experiential learning across BC.
- A significant proportion of students in all 4 years complete practicums outside of the Lower Mainland, in communities throughout BC.
- The Faculty is committed to taking “an integrated approach to support expanded access to both education and healthcare within underserved communities,” as outlined in the *Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences Strategic Plan 2017-2022: Catalyst for Change*¹.
- This project aims to offer increased opportunities for students to gain sustained practice experience in rural/remote regions and underserved communities across the province.

OBJECTIVE

To inform the development of a regional practicum model within the UBC E2P PharmD program.

METHODS

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

- Focused scan using open resources on program websites to gather information
- Local (UBC context) scan: UBC Health Practice Education Committee (PEC) membership formed local subset of 9 programs
- National scan: Pharmacy Experiential Programs of Canada formed the national subset of 9 schools, however 2 schools in Quebec were excluded due to website content being in French
- At this time, additional information directly from programs was not sought

LITERATURE REVIEW

- UBC Summon and PubMed to search for scholarly and peer-reviewed articles
- Due to lack of articles around these types of models in pharmacy context, focused on medical school programs to solicit information about longitudinal integrated clerkships (LICs)
- 7 studies from the literature search were used to understand the benefits of implementing this type of model/similar models

SURVEY

- Anonymous, voluntary Qualtrics survey deployed to Year 1 to 4 E2P PharmD students in the 2020-2021 academic year
- Microsoft Excel used for quantitative data analysis and manual thematic coding used for qualitative data

RESULTS

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

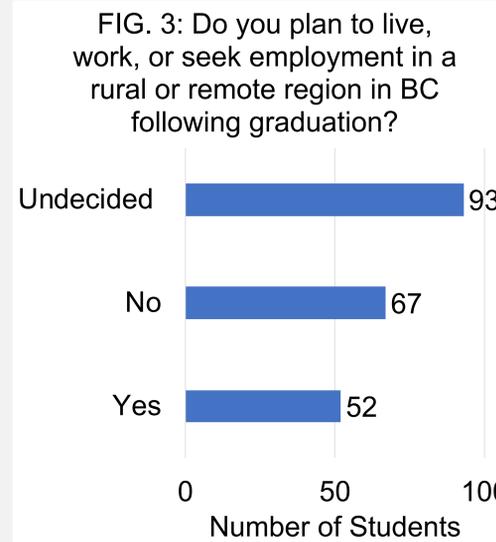
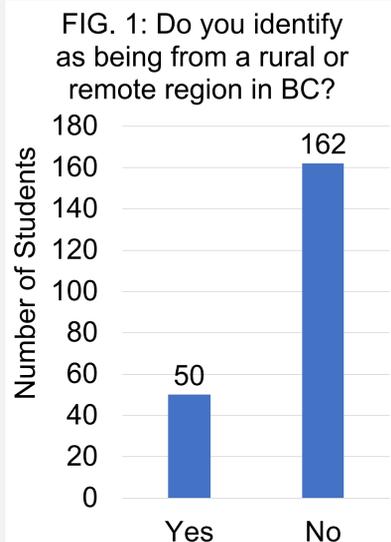
- Based on the results from the environmental scan, currently no pharmacy program in Canada has implemented a similar model.
- Locally, UBC Faculty of Medicine has implemented Integrated Community Clerkships since 2004 and the Department of Physical Therapy has implemented the Master of Physical Therapy-North program

LITERATURE REVIEW

- Indicated “LICs” in medical schools have been generally favourable:
- Provide positive learning experience to students in terms of continual feedback from supervisors, greater interaction with patients, and preparation for practice^{2,3}
 - LIC students ranked significantly higher for communication and history-taking skills scores compared to students who completed a Traditional Block Rotation⁴
 - LIC is a tool to address the maldistribution of physicians. Graduates who completed a rural LIC are more likely to practise in a rural rather than urban site⁵

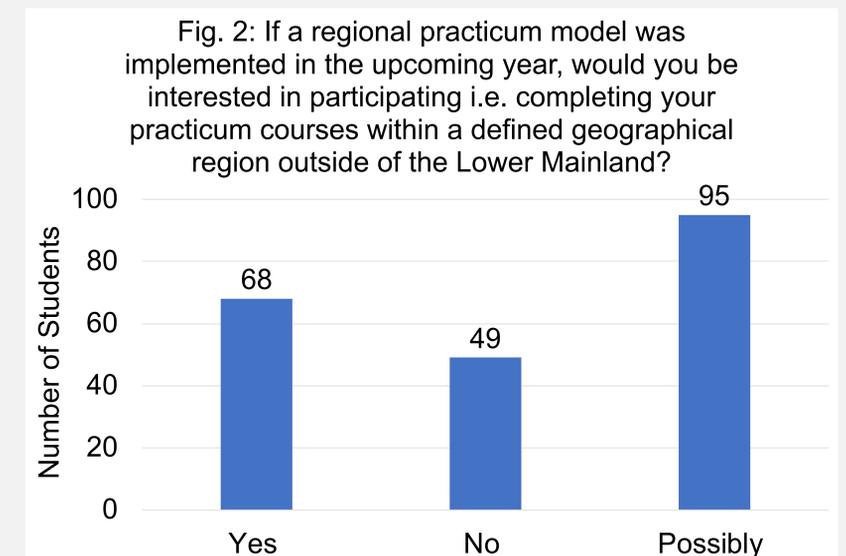
SURVEY - PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

- n = 212 (response rate: 212/889)
- Respondent year in the program:
 - 28 (13%) in PY4
 - 56 (26%) in PY3
 - 61 (29%) in PY2
 - 67 (32%) in PY1



- Top three items pharmacy students indicated they foresee as **barriers** to participating in a regional practicum model:
 1. Challenges finding accommodations
 2. Financial concerns
 3. Concerns with relocation

- Top three reasons students indicated would **interest them** in participating in a regional practicum model and completing practicums in a rural or remote community:
 - Seeking a unique practicum experience
 - More career opportunities after graduation
 - Have an interest in pursuing a rural or remote practicum placement
- Preliminary analysis noted three major themes for the open-answer question “What **supports** from the Faculty would be helpful to students participating in a regional practicum model?”:
 - **Accommodation, Financial Support, Transportation**



CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

- Although information from pharmacy context was lacking, findings from reviewed literature and focused environmental scan suggested benefits to developing this type of model for pharmacy
- Student interest in regional model was mixed, with majority of respondents being “possibly” interested, however 32% of students responding did indicate interest
- Addressing barriers and student support needs, as is feasible, will be paramount as next steps are undertaken
- As part of the developing evaluation plan, it will be important to monitor student progress during practicums and engagement in the community with this model
- Support for practice sites and practice educators participating in this model will also be key
- Implementation of this model could also address the maldistribution of pharmacists in rural and remote communities, to increase accessibility to health care, as seen by the LIC model⁵



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