

GLOBAL HEALTH COMPETENCIES FOR DOCTORS AND OTHER HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

In our increasingly interdependent world, global health is of relevance to all healthcare professionals. Population movement and shifting disease patterns mean that healthcare professionals practicing in the UK are now challenged to deliver effective healthcare to multicultural societies with diverse needs. Clinicians are increasingly being asked to take on leadership roles that would benefit from an understanding of disparate healthcare systems and the impact of globalisation on health.

We would like to invite you to take part in round 1 of a three-part consultation. We ask for your comments on the draft competencies. To thank you for your involvement, we will enter you into a prize draw for one of two **£50 book vouchers**.

Any health professional, health academic, health educator, patient or indeed any member of the public may take part. All responses to this survey will remain anonymous. However we would like to know your profession or role relation to the health service to inform analysis of the results.

The aim of this consultation is to produce a framework for postgraduate training that identifies generic, core competencies in global health for postgraduate healthcare professional training. The focus is on “what a doctor working in a high income country needs to be able to do”, and it will be accompanied with examples of how training to achieve these competencies could be delivered. The results may inform competency frameworks for other health professionals and in low and middle income countries.

If you would like to take part or any further information please email the Intercollegiate Global Health Curriculum Group: a.merriel@bham.ac.uk

The Global Burden of Disease

1. A healthcare professional should be able to describe the distribution of the global burden of disease. Consider the potential implications for the UK and the effectiveness and affordability of interventions to address these.

This competency is important because healthcare professionals work in a global healthcare environment and being aware of the different patterns of disease experienced by patients from different backgrounds enables us to provide the highest quality care to all.

Examples of how a trainee could demonstrate this competence:

1. contribute to the management of fever in a returning traveler
2. take a thorough social including country of birth and travel history, and have an awareness of how this may affect differential diagnoses
3. be aware of and discuss the most common causes of death globally and locally. Understand why there is regional variation and how this influences the differential diagnoses for a patient
4. demonstrate knowledge of the diverse clinical indicator diseases for HIV and be able to make a prompt and timely assessment as to whether a test should be offered
5. read, analyse and respond to articles about public international health

Socio-economic Determinants of Health

2. A healthcare professional should be able to demonstrate knowledge of the broader determinants of health worldwide (including politics, culture, socioeconomic factors and gender) and strategies to influence policy relating to health inequalities.

This competency is important because health is impacted by a variety of non-biomedical factors, understanding the interplay of these factors will enable more holistic diagnosis and treatment of patients.

Examples of how a trainee could demonstrate this competence:

1. discuss the drivers of health inequalities in the local population, and consider how these drivers may affect an individual patient seen in clinical practice
2. consider the example of childhood obesity, examine the social determinants of health within the global context drawing a trajectory from childhood obesity and its determinants to non-communicable diseases in adulthood.
3. hold a patient-centered context-driven consultation with someone who has had a refugee experience, demonstrating knowledge of the health issues a person may face in the setting of forced migration.
4. understand and discuss the impact of deprivation during childhood on the development of adult mental illness
5. demonstrate understanding of the complex and interconnected factors underpinning female genital mutilation (FGM) and adopt appropriate communication and clinical skills to address the needs of patients affected by FGM

Environmental Determinants of Health

3. A healthcare professional should be aware of the direct and indirect health implications of environmental change and strategies to most effectively address these issues at a local, national and global level.

This competency is important because environmental change affects the communities in which we live and impacts on both patterns of disease and movement of populations. There are opportunities to minimise the negative health impacts of environmental change, whilst supporting our patients to improve their health.

Examples of how a trainee could demonstrate this competence:

1. understand and be able to discuss the concept of planetary boundaries, and the human health implications of crossing these boundaries
2. work with patients to enable them to take up healthier lifestyles which also protect the environment e.g. using active transport and eating locally-grown fresh vegetables
3. support the healthcare organization to develop sustainable policies and patient pathways
4. discuss with a colleague, with a healthcare manager and with a local policy maker the impacts of environmental change on human health and the response required
5. read about and understand the links between climate change, migration and human health

Health Systems

4. A healthcare professional should recognise that health systems are structured and function differently across the globe and be aware of how this impacts upon health outcomes. They should also be able to describe the essential components of a health system using the six building blocks of the WHO health system framework.

This competency is important due to the increasing role that doctors are playing in the development of services and reorganisation of health care. It will also enable doctors to better understand the situations and healthcare facilities that patients may have experienced when living in or visiting other countries.

Examples of how a trainee could demonstrate this competence:

1. using evidence from comparative models in other countries, discuss the structure of the health service, recent changes in the service and the impact on population health
2. participate in local governance structures e.g. a Clinical Commissioning Group.
3. undertake an audit project to make a positive change in the local health system and improve patient care
4. work in a health system in another country
5. speak to other health professionals and patients who have trained within or been a patient within other health systems to understand key differences and how this impacts on patients' care

Global Health Governance

5. A healthcare professional should be able to list the key actors in global health including the roles of international organisations, the commercial sector and civil society. They should also be able to consider how policy made at a global or national level can impact on health at a local level.

This competency is important because national and international policies and guidelines affect care in our local hospitals. Knowing how and by whom these decisions are made gives us an opportunity to input into their development and adequately implement national/international policies in a locally relevant way.

Examples of how a trainee could demonstrate this competence:

1. know about and consider joining a guideline development group at local, national or international level
2. discuss the influence of pharmaceutical companies on local population health
3. discuss with a local government representative the impact of international trade agreements on local population health.
4. read about and understand the impact of agricultural policy on antibiotic resistance.
5. discuss the roles international organisations, such as the World Health Organisation and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) play in infectious diseases outbreaks and how these organisations interact with national and local health bodies.

Human Rights and Ethics

6. A healthcare professional should respect the rights and equal value of all people without discrimination and provide compassionate care for all.

This competency is important because health professionals have a duty to treat every patient equally and respectfully.

Examples of how a trainee could demonstrate this competence:

1. respect the rights of all patients to have access to the care they require, by obtaining appropriate communication support (e.g. writing pad, hearing aids or a translator) where required
2. deliver high-quality evidence-based care to all patients regardless of age, race, gender or disability.
3. demonstrate knowledge of the Geneva Convention and the rights afforded to refugees and asylum seekers
4. know the most common psychological and physical signs of torture and the importance of documentation in relation to torture.
5. listen to or read patient narratives about their experience of 'being ill' and reflect on how this could affect your practice

Cultural diversity and Health

7. A healthcare professional should demonstrate the ability to communicate with and effectively provide high-quality care to patients from diverse sociocultural backgrounds.

This competency is important because our patients come from increasingly diverse backgrounds and we need this skill in order to provide high-quality care.

Examples of how a trainee could demonstrate this competence:

1. provide care to patients from a different sociocultural backgrounds, taking into account language needs, different health beliefs and the importance of gaining fully informed consent
2. demonstrate understanding that patients from different cultural backgrounds are likely to hold different health beliefs by explaining investigation and treatment options using culturally appropriate and individualised communication skills.
3. discuss the interplay between biology, culture, historical, economic, political and social forces
4. run a journal club or undertake personal study to explore the contribution of medical anthropology to public health
5. attend a communication skills course focused on cultural health factors