



To What Extent is HIV Medicine Taught in Health Profession Academic Programs?

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Background

While the HIV workforce is shrinking, health profession programs (HPPs) and trainings at academic institutions provide inadequate training in HIV care.¹ Furthermore, HIV is not taught in many health profession academic or training programs because it is not required by school accrediting agencies. This limited exposure to HIV care during their pre-service years, may explain why many students end up choosing specialties outside of HIV.² In September 2018, The Midwest AIDS Training and Education Center (MATEC) began the HRSA-funded project, Midwest Integration of the National HIV Curriculum (MINHC), with the goal to enhance the quality of HIV education and training at accredited HPPs, in HHS regions V and VII, through integration of the National HIV Curriculum (NHC) e-Learning platform into their education and training curricula.

Purpose

The HPP Screening Assessment was designed to screen the HPPs interested in participating in the project with the goal of selecting at least 20 HPPs to participate in MINHC.

Completed Screening Assessments by Discipline and State				
State	Medicine	Nursing	Pharmacy	Total
Illinois	2	1	4	7
Indiana	0	0	1	1
Iowa	0	1	1	2
Kansas	0	4	0	4
Michigan	0	2	0	2
Minnesota	1	2	1	4
Missouri	0	1	1	2
Ohio	2	2	3	7
Wisconsin	0	0	2	2
Total	5	13	13	31

Methods

The Screening Assessment was created in Qualtrics and distributed via an emailed link throughout MATEC's ten state region to 44 HPPs that expressed interest in participating in the project. A total of 31 assessments were submitted back for consideration (70% response rate). From MATEC's ten states, only Nebraska did not have any HPPs that were interested in participating in the project

The assessment collected data on which of the 37 topics from the NHC's six self study modules are currently taught at the HPP as well as the likelihood that these topics would be integrated into their required curriculum. For each topic, the HPP faculty indicated whether the topic is currently taught "not at all", "somewhat", or "a great deal".

National HIV Curriculum e-Learning Platform Self Study Modules

Module 1:
Screening and Diagnosis

Module 2:
Basic HIV Primary Care

Module 3:
Antiretroviral Therapy

Module 4:
Co-Occurring Conditions

Module 5:
Prevention of HIV

Module 6:
Key Populations

Findings

Extent To Which Topics from the NHC are Currently Taught in Select HPPs in the Midwest			
Extent Topic is Taught	Ranking (Top 5)	Topic	Number of HPPs (n=31)
A Great Deal	1	Antiretroviral treatment	16
	1	Opportunistic infections	16
	3	Side effects	15
	3	STI's	15
	5	Drug interactions	14
Somewhat	1	Perinatal transmission	22
	2	HIV in women	21
	2	HBV/HCV co-infection	21
	4	HIV prevention strategies	20
	5	HIV in sexual minorities	19
Not at All	1	Retention in HIV care	21
	2	Linkage to HIV care	15
	3	HIV in children/adolescents	14
	4	HIV in older adults	12
	5	Mental health disorders	10
	5	HIV in racial minorities	10

Results on currently taught HIV topics varied between Medicine, Nursing, and Pharmacy programs. For example, all Pharmacy programs already teach a great deal about antiretroviral therapy (ART), side effects, drug interactions, and opportunistic infections, which are important topics for their profession, but they currently do not teach much about linkage, retention, mental health, or substance use disorder (SUD). Medicine's current teachings include topics with a clinical focus such as ART, side effects, HBV/HCV, and comorbidities, but also mental health and SUD. Nursing's focus is primarily on screening, testing, prevention, and to some degree, linkage.

Conclusions

- Approximately half of accredited HPPs of Medicine, Nursing, and Pharmacy in the Midwest that were surveyed are teaching a great deal on some HIV topics than initially expected, including: ART, opportunistic infections, side effects, STIs, and drug interactions.
- HPPs across all three disciplines currently do not teach anything on retention and very little on linkage. Both are important steps in the HIV Care Continuum; thus, linkage and retention are the most important identified gaps in HPPs' existing curriculum.
- HPPs can fill the HIV care gaps in their training and curriculum by utilizing the information and multiple features the NHC e-Learning platform provides.

References

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