

OP24.3

Expectations and experiences of UK family doctors prior to European exchange placements

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Background and Aims: The Vasco da Gama Movement Hippokrates exchange programme facilitates 2-week observational international exchanges for family doctors in training (Associates in Training - AiTs) and those within 5 years of completing vocational training (First5s) to encourage exchange and mobility, providing a broader perspective to the concepts of Family Medicine. Despite the increasing popularity of the scheme and the anecdotally positive support of participants, hosts and organisers, there is a paucity of research to date demonstrating the benefits of Hippokrates exchanges. We aimed to explore the experiences and expectations of Associates in Training (AITs)/First5s prior to exchanges.

Method: An electronic survey was sent out to all exchange participants prior to their 2-week exchange. Two reminders were sent via email to encourage participants to complete the survey.

Results: 38 out of 49 (77.6%) of AiTs (89.5%) and First5s (10.5%) responded to the survey. Prior to their exchanges, less than half of respondents (47%) felt that they had a good understanding of health systems including our own. Further, most respondents (86.8%) did not have good knowledge of alternative models of primary care. When asked about variety in practice, over a third of respondents (39.5%) did not feel that they had exposure to varied approaches to patient care nor did they have experience in diverse cultural environments (42.1%). However, all respondents have been inspired to learn about international primary care, with most respondents looking to improve leadership skills (89.5%), work internationally (94.7%) and aimed to learn about non-verbal communication during exchange consultations (92.1%).

Conclusion: AiTs/First5s have limited exposure to international primary care and the diversity in practice this brings despite being inspired to learn more about international healthcare systems. Exchange programmes have the potential to bridge this knowledge gap.