Developing Response Protocols for Emergencies Abroad

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Introduction

Part 1: Medical Emergency Preparedness

Part 2: During the Life Threatening Crisis

Part 3: Evacuation or Repatriation

Full-group Case Study/Scenario

Small group Case Study/Scenario

Pairs Case Study Scenario

Questions and Answers
Medical Emergency Preparedness
Can be perceived or real

May provoke panic or anxiety

Illness or injury requiring medical attention

Victim of crime or accident

Can impact an individual or entire group
Crisis

Death or life-threatening conditions involving illness, injury or victim of crime or accident.

Effects last several days or weeks

Can impact an individual or multiple groups
Disaster

Hundreds or thousands of deaths and injuries

Effects last weeks, months or even years

Japan
Create Pre-departure Health Review/ Disclosure Process

- Identify pre-existing medical conditions
- Collaborate with family physician and campus-based health professionals
- Identify local conditions that may impact participation
- Confirm availability of specialist care in host location
- Determine availability and reliability of medication(s)
- Evaluate appropriateness of program housing options
- Assess ability to participate in program activities
Develop Emergency Response Checklist

Key Elements

• Obtain important facts – who, what, when, where, why, how
• Follow campus crisis management protocols
• Communicate information as appropriate

Source: Michigan State University Office of Study Abroad

Himalayas
Pre-Departure Communication Plan with Home Campus

Formalized communication plan for program staff and local partners to report emergencies.

Determine under what situations require family notification – serious accidents requiring outpatient care, or inpatient care only.

Clear understanding of roles – confirm who at the institution notifies and maintains regular communication with the family.

Clear and transparent student understanding of how communication will flow during the emergency.
International Insurance Coverage

Direct billing – outpatient and inpatient

Mental health coverage

Bedside visit benefit

Accidental Death Benefit

Political/Security Evacuation

Natural Disaster Evacuation

Medical Evacuation

South Africa
Research Quality of Medical Care in Host Location

Health training for faculty leaders, local partners, and study abroad staff:

• Nearest Emergency Room
• English-speaking physicians, mental health providers and dentists
• 24 hour pharmacy
• International Assistance Provider
Student Emergency Contact Information

Pre-departure
- Family home and mobile phones
- Signed release to discuss medical condition with family representative
- Family representative with U.S. passport and ability to travel

Post-departure
- Updated mobile phone number
- Develop a communication plan for use during independent travel
Alcohol

Educate students on cultural expectations relating to alcohol

Harmful interactions – mixing alcohol with medications

Risks of over-consumption – injury, sexual assault, crime

Center for Global Education -
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hFYz2cYHBLQ

Ireland
During the life threatening crisis
Life-Threatening Crisis

- Planning for the crisis before it happens
- Obtain all information (who, what, when, where and how)
- Have staff/contacts help student first
- Seek appropriate medical care
Crisis Action Plan

In seeking medical assistance
- share what you know about pre-existing conditions/medications
- if student is conscious, have him/her contact family
- if student is not conscious, decide who will call emergency contact
Who Shares Information with Whom?

Who are the stakeholders and in what order do they need to receive information?

• Inform host school and home school of student
• Inform local embassy or consulate
• Inform other students on the program

Nicaragua
Informing Relevant Constituencies

• What information can be shared with whom?
• Where do you have contact information/how is information shared
• Importance of refreshing info on regular basis
• Talking with staff and other students
Helping Parents/ Family to Travel

• Who has a passport?
• What do they need help with?
• What are the types of questions or concerns which are likely to come up?
• What type of support will they need?
• Expect the unexpected
Total Support

- Notifying local officials and contacts
- Transport of body and funeral home arrangements (can insurance company help?)
- Grief counseling (family, students, staff)
- What type of support will they need?
- Self-care
Evacuation or Repatriation
Theory/ Practice

Plan for “freezing” not panic

Amanda Ripley, author of “The Unthinkable: Who Survives When Disaster Strikes and Why”

Everyone needs basic first responder training, not just supervisors

Australia

Argentina
Insurance Plan/ Responsibilities

Evacuation

- Patient passport
- Patient escort
- Patient readiness/travel
- Release to family or U.S. hospital admit

Repatriation (Remains)

- Death certification/ travel docs from U.S. Embassy
- Autopsy
- Religious considerations
- Cremate or embalm
- Receiving party (U.S. airport)
- Death benefit
- Make no scholarship promises
Follow-up Back Home

Recovering

• Prepare for media inquiries
• Send get well card from office, encourage others units to do the same
• Assist with the sorting of academics and/or finances
• Visit student (with other students)
• Help with any medical reimbursement paperwork
• Check in after 4-6 weeks

France
Follow-up Back Home

Death

- Prepare for media inquiries
- Send sympathy card from office, encourage other units to do the same
- Obtain visitation and funeral information, share with relevant units
- Send flowers to funeral home
- Arrange staff/students to attend visitation or funeral
- Investigate posthumous degree possibilities
- Make no scholarship promises
Case Study 2

• You receive a call at 2:00 AM on a Saturday morning from your resident director in New Delhi, India.

• Sally traveled to Goa for the weekend, but was hit by a car as she tried to cross a busy street.

• She is alive, but her condition is critical. Medical decisions need to be made on her behalf.

• Delhi is 1200 miles from Goa. Flying time is 2.5 hours.

• What are your first steps?

• Sally’s companion, Nancy, is at the hospital with Sally, and is very upset. How do you handle Nancy?

• Sally’s parents are divorced
Case Studies/ Scenarios
Practice: Death

• It is 4:00 pm on Good Friday. You are at cabin in a rural area. You receive a call from the faculty leader of a short-term program in Santiago, Chile.
• One of the students drowned at a nearby beach.
• You know the student is Muslim, because she requested special meal arrangements in accordance with her religious practices.

• What are your first steps?
References

National Institutes for Health – Harmful Interactions: Mixing Alcohol with Medicines

U.S. Department of Education – Higher Education Center
http://www.higheredcenter.org

Center for Global Education - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hFYz2cYHBLQ
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