

## Survey-Based Pilot Investigation to Establish Meaningful Education Links in the Gambia

**Authors :** Miriam Fahmy, Shalini Fernando

**Abstract :** Educational links between teaching hospitals and universities can provide visits with great impact for both sides. As a visitor, one is responsible for the content, respecting current practice while offering guidance from a completely different perspective. There is little documented guidance for establishing links with universities in developing countries and providing meaningful teaching and exchange programmes. An initial contact retrieved one response with regards to written curriculum. The otolaryngology department from a Swansea teaching hospital visited a university in the Gambia. A consultant and clinical fellow visited with medical students to deliver lectures, clinical skills and informal teaching such as bedside and small group teaching. Students who had participated in teaching provided by the visiting university were asked to give feedback. This information was collated and used to evaluate the impact, and to guide future visits, including thinking of establishing a curriculum tailored to the West Africa region. The students felt they gained the most from informal sessions such as bedside teaching and felt that more practical experience on real patients and pathology would be most beneficial to them. Given that internet is poor, they also suggested a video library for their reference. Many of them look forward to visiting Swansea and are interested in the differences in practice and technologies. The findings are limited to little previous literature and student feedback. Student feedback sparked further questions and careful contemplation. There is great scope for introducing a range of teaching resources but it is important to avoid assumptions and imposition of a western curriculum and education system, a larger sample is needed with input from lecturers and curriculum writers in leading universities. In conclusion, more literature and guidance needs to be established for future visitors contemplating an educational link.

**Keywords :** education, impact, West Africa, university links

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