

Undergraduate Cardiac Arrest Internship Program Leads to Well-Trained Peer-To-Peer Instructors and Increased Community CPR Training

Despite advances in prevention and acute care, cardiac arrest remains a public health risk and leading cause of death in the United States. Bystander CPR is provided at low rates throughout the US, which provides a substantial need to address this issue. Many states have developed programs and legislation for CPR instruction in high schools; however, programming lacks in the collegiate setting. The objective of this study was to describe an undergraduate Cardiac Arrest Internship Program that was designed to train peer-to-peer CPR instructors, increase CPR instruction in the community, increase bystander CPR rates, and provide students with a structured experience in resuscitation science.

Undergraduate students applied for volunteer internship positions with a minimum commitment of 10 hours/month. With support from the Center for EMS at OSU and the American Heart Association, interns were provided BLS certification along with monthly didactics on resuscitation science, training in public speaking and CPR instruction, and 16 hours of shadowing experiences in the emergency department and with emergency medical services. For the first 2 months, interns were assessed, and trained, on their community CPR training skills. Following confirmation of proficiency, interns began independent CPR training on campus and in the surrounding community.

The Cardiac Arrest Internship Program was launched in June 2016 with 15 undergraduate students selected, and grew to 25 interns for 2017. Intern training was conducted with all achieving BLS certification and passing their training evaluations, confirming their ability to teach community CPR. Interns planned programs, taught classes, and facilitated community outreach by developing a website and a social media presence (<https://cprohiostate.com/>). Since 2016, 106 CPR classes were planned and conducted, including both campus and community settings (67 and 39, respectively). The total number of bystanders trained in CPR was 3,206, of which 57% (1,843) were undergraduate students trained on campus.

Development of the Cardiac Arrest Internship Program led to undergraduate students who were well-trained in community CPR instruction and a more educated community. Future work will focus on evaluating the effectiveness of peer-to-peer CPR training through measurement of CPR quality metrics.