Advanced Cardiac Life Support Training: Comparison of Brazilian vs North American Student Responses.

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A nationally coordinated effort has recently begun to teach Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) to health care professionals throughout Brazil. Under the direction of FUNCOR of the Brazilian Heart Foudation Society of Cardiology these courses have carefully followed the American Heart Association’s ACLS guidelines. ACLS materials (english) were available prior to the course for each student. Data on student preparation and end of course evaluations have been prospectively gathered and comparisons made between the first 122 Brazilian students and a similar 1997 student cohort from the University of Arizona (n = 31). Students evaluated the different course aspects as non-satisfactory, satisfactory, or superior. No differences in ratings concerning course schedule, course dynamics, or content were detected with both groups giving each of these categories approximately a 45% “superior” rating. Significantly more Brazilian students rated “superior” course organization (62 vs 42%; p < .02) and duration (10 vs 27%; p < .05) than did the Arizona students.

Instructors were rated similarly high and “superior” by both student groups (57 vs 48%; p < .5). Likewise, no differences were found in course materials (56 vs 45%; p < .3) or knowledge gained (50 vs 50%; p < .9). Brazilian students did rank facilities (54 vs 26%; p < 0.01) and mannequin use (44 vs 20%; p < 0.02) higher than the Arizona students. Both groups of students appear to prepare equally well, with 33% vs 50% reading a majority of the ACLS text prior to the course (p < .3). The vast majority claimed their treatment of cardiac arrest victims would be drastically altered from having attended the ALCS course (95 vs 90%; p < .4). Finally, in both countries there was unanimous agreement that the course was worthwhile and should be recommended for all healthcare professionals.

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