During the summer of 2008, Iowa experienced a natural disaster of epic proportions. Record precipitation in the Midwest and saturated soil from the snow melt led to swollen river basins across Iowa. Eighty-six percent of the counties in our state were declared Presidential disaster counties (See Figure 1). The Iowa and Cedar River Basins were among the most significantly affected areas. Rivers reached record crests. The Cedar River reached 31.13 ft (19.13 ft above flood stage) and the Iowa River reached 31.53 ft (9.53 ft above flood stage) (See Figure 2). Natural disasters have been documented to have numerous effects on the delivery of healthcare. One often overlooked consequence of a natural disaster is its effect on student learning in the disaster-affected healthcare environment.

A web-based survey (12-item for IPPE and 26-item for APPE) was sent to all student pharmacists completing an APPE or IPPE during the time of the natural disaster. The survey included questions regarding participation in recovery efforts, completeness of the practice experience, and difficulties encountered during the practice experience.

The overall impact on the ability of pharmacy practice sites to deliver a complete IPPE or APPE was minimal. However, the natural disaster did have some effect on student learning. Students’ comments indicated they felt they learned how to handle an emergency situation and noted the impact on the patients they served during this time.

**Background**

During the summer of 2008, Iowa experienced a natural disaster of epic proportions. Record precipitation in the Midwest and saturated soil from the snow melt led to swollen river basins across Iowa. Eighty-six percent of the counties in our state were declared Presidential disaster counties (See Figure 1). The Iowa and Cedar River Basins were among the most significantly affected areas. Rivers reached record crests. The Cedar River reached 31.13 ft (19.13 ft above flood stage) and the Iowa River reached 31.53 ft (9.53 ft above flood stage) (See Figure 2). Natural disasters have been documented to have numerous effects on the delivery of healthcare. One often overlooked consequence of a natural disaster is its effect on student learning in the disaster-affected healthcare environment.

**Objective**

This poster describes the impact of a natural disaster on student pharmacist learning while completing Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experiences (APPE) and Introductory Pharmacy Practice Experiences (IPPE) at the University of Iowa College of Pharmacy.

**Methods**

A web-based survey (12-item for IPPE and 26-item for APPE) was sent to all student pharmacists completing an APPE or IPPE during the time of the natural disaster. The survey included questions regarding participation in recovery efforts, completeness of the practice experience, and difficulties encountered during the practice experience.

**Results**

During and immediately following the natural disaster, 12 out of 23 student pharmacists completing IPPEs and 53 out of 91 student pharmacists completing APPEs were in the Iowa River and Cedar River basin area. The survey was completed by 52 student pharmacists (11 completing IPPEs, 41 completing APPEs). Of this group, 22 students indicated they were affected in some way by the natural disaster (See Figure 3). The level of effect ranged from total evacuation of the practice site to increased commute time. Types of pharmacy practice experiences affected included community, hospital, family medicine, acute care, advanced practice community, and elective experiences (See Figure 4). All students affected felt they received a complete pharmacy practice experience during and following the natural disaster. However, 8 students indicated they “missed days” from their rotation site during this time.

For questions regarding this poster, please email susan-staggs@uiowa.edu

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