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SPACE MEDICINE OPPORTUNITIES FOR UNDERGRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION IN
CANADA: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

Abstract

Aerospace medicine training is often difficult to obtain outside of military education streams. Undergraduate medical trainees and residents may undertake training opportunities but often have trouble locating programs and/or receiving credit for their experiences and learning. In many countries, no formal aerospace medicine training program or pathway exists, and trainees must search out opportunities on their own. Canada is used as an example of a country which, until recently, had no defined civilian aerospace medicine training program or pathway. Recent development of a Diploma in Aerospace Medicine certified by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons now outlines a series of guideposts for trainees and medical professionals seeking advancement in aerospace medicine. Growth of the aviation and aerospace fields will require more training opportunities and more aerospace medicine professionals to support the increased number of aviators and spacefaring population. This will be particularly important as commercial space develops the potential for civilian spaceflight. While few opportunities exist for training, we highlight the major space medicine training opportunities that have been recently available to Canadian undergraduate medical trainees and residents. These were previously made available through partnerships between the Canadian Space Agency (CSA) and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). It is our hope that highlighting previous and current opportunities may aid in the development of a formal training program leading to certification in aerospace medicine for Canadians and act as an example for other nations.