

BRIDGING THE TRAINING TO PRACTICE GAP IN COMBAT MEDICS WORKING
IN PRIMARY CARE ENVIRONMENTS

Medical training undertaken by United States Army combat medics is in misalignment with their medical function (Lohr, Harris, & Jeste, 2004). This is the selected problem to be addressed in the current action research project. Most combat medics are working in military base facilities as opposed to combat arenas. Prior training is focused on the use of combat medicine. The majority of medics are functioning in a peacetime environment rather than a combative setting (McIlvaine, 2011). Most of the medics are employed in units that do not support a combat or field environment (McIlvaine, 2011). The facilities are essentially located in battalion aid stations (BAS), clinics, and hospitals where war ready medical skills are not generally utilized. The need for generalized knowledge of primary care skills is evidenced as appropriate to service military personnel and dependents not currently deployed. To bridge the training to practice gap of medics in a primary care environment, a new approach to their training is needed. Unknown is what the specific skills and knowledge are that army medics perceive to be needed to function in a primary care environment. In this study, medics were asked to discuss the skills necessary for medics to function effectively in a primary care environment. The purpose of this action research project is to prioritize the skills that evolved from interviews and that will be used to develop the new training approach.