**Discussion**

Our survey included administering 24 face to face questionnaires to various students that were randomly selected on and around Southern Illinois Universities campus in order to evaluate the awareness level of our student population about global health. The surveys were anonymous and confidential. Below is a discussion about the results and its implications.

We asked four questions on the survey pertaining to student’s demographics. We found that the majority of our data was collected from juniors (42%), followed by seniors (29%), and sophomores (17%), with freshman having the lowest number of participants at 12%. Of the 24 participants, 58% were female and 42% were male. We were unable to interview any international students, but did have some variation in ethnicity with 75% of the participants being Caucasian, 17% African-American, and 8% Hispanic or Latino.

There were 10 multiple choice questions pertaining to global health awareness. When surveyed on Question 1,” the main reason global health issues are of concern to everyone is:” A majority of 54% had said that Infectious disease rates are increasing at a rapid rate. Only 29% correctly answered that “the world is shrinking and many diseases are not limited by national boundaries. This may be because of the wording “the world is shrinking” could have confused participants.

Question 2 when asked, “Which is NOT a remaining global health challenge”, the majority (62%) of our participants, chose correctly, that Death of Children due to small pox was the answer. We believe that this could be due to the lack of talk in media, and personal experience of Americans concerning small pox. Participants agreed that this is NOT a current challenge.

Question 3 asked: “what is likely to be an important determinant of health for people in poor countries”. Most of our participants (79%) chose lack of safe water, while being from a socially well respected group was the least chosen. It appears that many of the participants noticed that the later answers were clear distracters and chose the most obvious answer pertaining to water. Infomercials and commercials for clean water issues are constantly circulated in the media to raise awareness and funds to combat this, this is a likely a reason most got this correct.

Question 4, When asked “ one leading cause of falling below the poverty line for at least some time in many low income countries”, the most common answer chosen was poor quality of medical care, which would make sense based on our health care today in low income countries; However, the correct answer, getting sick, was the least chosen answer (25%), this may be because people get sick everywhere, they may not realize that drastically higher rate of infectious diseases that are present in low income countries, compared to chronic diseases present in high income countries, which require on-going medical care.

Question 5 asked,” which of the following is the only-high income country to have more than 50% of total expenditure in the private sector”, 46% answered the United States, which is correct. As Americans, healthcare and health insurance is very popular discussion in universities and media, especially since we just had elections last year,

Question 6 asked, “In simplest terms, what is culture?” Of the answers, 54% of participants answered correctly, we believe this may have been different had the survey been administered to participants of a lower education level. As American university students, we take a variety of “general education courses”, which equip us to have a well-rounded education that encourages cultural awareness and competency for the globalized world we live in today.

Question 7 asked, “In which region of the world would the burden from indoor air pollution be the greatest?” Again, 54% of the participants answered correctly, stating South Asia. This may be because it is common knowledge to most that Asia is densely populated, students may have associated this with overcrowding and overuse of indoor pollutants.

Question 8 asked, “Which of the following regions has the worst nutritional problems?” An overwhelming majority (83%), answered correctly, stating Sub-Saharan Africa. Africa, again is commonly known in the media as one of the poorest regions in the world. Often commercials for non-profit organizations highlight “starving children in Africa” as their purpose for fundraising, this would be an obvious reason for the high number of correct answers.

Question 9 asked, “Which figure is the closest to the share of communicable diseases in the total burden of disease in poor countries in Africa?” The correct answer was 60%, however, the majority (62%), chose the middle option 40%. The survey was administered to all different majors; it would have been interesting, and good for future surveys, to know what their majors were. For this survey, if the students are not health majors, they may not understand what the term “burden of disease” means, therefore, they chose the middle of the road answer to be safe.

The last question asked, “ The leading cause of adult death worldwide is:” A large number ( 33%), answered cancer, which is understandable considering the high number of cancer rates that we have in the United States, as well as many other high income countries in the world, however; a larger number of the population live in middle to low income countries and the correct answer worldwide is Ischemic heart disease. The majority (59%) answered this correctly.

In conclusion, 6 of the 10 questions had a 50% correct rate or better. We believe that this is a good result considering that the participants come from all majors and areas of study, and are not necessarily involved in the health field. Also, this survey did not come with expectations or specific goals, so we cannot measure if we met any certain number of correct answers. We did not have any answers with 90% correct or above; in the future this could show that there is much room for increased awareness of global health among lay people and those outside the health profession. We hope that our survey got the participants thinking about global health and that we can influence others through future surveys and activities to learn and contribute to the health and improvement of disease burdened countries all over the world.