

EDUCATIONAL NEED

Third and fourth year medical students in the Brody School of Medicine have the option to participate in a 2-week or 4-week elective in Endocrinology.

Historically, the elective has been comprised almost entirely of experiential learning within the contexts of the outpatient clinic and the inpatient consultation service.

Students are asked to attend our daily education sessions that are aimed at the needs of our residents and fellows; however, there is no formal instruction aimed at the needs of medical students.

Our goal is to develop a formal curriculum to address the educational needs of our student learners.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

We identified four learning objectives of high interest, importance, and relevance to our student learners:

1. Interview, examine, and present a patient with poorly-controlled diabetes mellitus
2. Write an H&P note for a new patient with poorly-controlled diabetes mellitus
3. Identify a patient's barriers to good glycemic control
4. Identify community-based resources available to our diabetic patients

PROPOSED CURRICULUM

Three core learning activities were devised to meet the four learning objectives. Satisfactory completion of the rotation will require satisfactory completion of the three core activities.

Activity 1: Present a New Patient

During the first week of the elective, the student will interview and examine a patient with diabetes mellitus who is being seen as a new patient in our clinic or on the inpatient consultation service. The student will present a full H&P to the faculty physician overseeing the patient's care. The faculty physician will then interview and examine the patient and discuss the patient's plan of care in the company of the student. Immediately following the encounter, the faculty physician will provide the student with feedback regarding his or her patient presentation in the form of a mini-CEX. A copy of the mini-CEX will be turned in to the rotation director.

Activity 2: Write a History and Physical

The student will write a formal H&P note for the patient encounter and submit a copy to the rotation director for evaluation. A grading rubric will be used to ensure that all necessary components of the H&P are present, and qualitative comments will also be provided. The rotation director will review the H&P with the student at the midpoint of the rotation.

Activity 3: Compose a Reflection Paper

The student will write a 1-2 page reflection paper on their experience with the patient, with a focus on describing (1) the patient's beliefs and attitudes towards diabetes management, (2) the patient's barriers to effective glycemic control, and (3) community-based resources that might address those barriers. The student will submit the reflection paper to the rotation director for evaluation. A checklist will be used to ensure that all 3 required components are present, and qualitative comments will also be provided. The rotation director will review the reflection paper with the student at the end of the rotation.

POTENTIAL IMPACT

The diabetes epidemic mandates that all physicians become familiar with the evaluation and management of diabetes mellitus. Academic endocrinologists are particularly well-positioned to provide trainees with an educational experience focused on diabetes care.

The value of students' experiential learning will be augmented by a formal curriculum which draws attention to the pertinent details of diabetes management. Simultaneously, students will hone the fundamental skills of history-taking, case-presenting, and note-writing that are necessary for practice in any area of medicine.

Reflections on patients' perceptions of disease/treatment and the identification of barriers to care will enable students to further develop core professional behaviors including empathy and humanism.

Raising students' awareness of community-based patient resources will enable them to partner with the community to provide more comprehensive and effective patient care.

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