11-2008

Meeting Students Where They Are: Educating Students with Varying Life Experiences About the Health Care Needs of Persons with Disabilities

Linda M. Long-Bellil  
*University of Massachusetts Medical School, Linda.Long@umassmed.edu*

Julie A. Jonassen  
*University of Massachusetts Medical School, Julie.Jonassen@umassmed.edu*

Mai-Lan A. Rogoff  
*University of Massachusetts Medical School, Mai-Lan.Rogoff@Umassmed.edu*

*See next page for additional authors*

Follow this and additional works at: http://escholarship.umassmed.edu/res_eval

Part of the *Educational Assessment, Evaluation, and Research Commons*, and the *Medicine and Health Sciences Commons*

Repository Citation

http://escholarship.umassmed.edu/res_eval/20

This material is brought to you by eScholarship@UMMS. It has been accepted for inclusion in Office of Institutional Research, Evaluation, and Assessment Publications and Presentations by an authorized administrator of eScholarship@UMMS. For more information, please contact Lisa.Palmer@umassmed.edu.
Meeting Students Where They Are: Educating Students with Varying Life Experiences About the Health Care Needs of Persons with Disabilities

Authors
Linda M. Long-Bellil, Julie A. Jonassen, Mai-Lan A. Rogoff, Susan V. Barrett, Candace Cassin, Darlene M. O'Connor, and Martin H. Young

This poster is available at eScholarship@UMMS: http://escholarship.umassmed.edu/res_eval/20
Since ADY1995-1996, Interclerkships—short, intensive 1-day courses interwoven between clerkships to introduce 3rd-year UMass medical students to topics that may have been poorly represented in the undergraduate medical curriculum. These clerkships emphasize acquisition of knowledge and skills not previously taught in the medical school experience. The impact of disabilities on medical care clearly represents an area of profound importance to the practice of medicine, yet this topic had previously taught in the medical school experience.

Interclerkship Description and Evaluation

Students participated in lectures and numerous small group workshops during this one-day Interclerkship. In facilitated small groups, students met with individuals with physical or developmental disabilities and their families and community advocates, sharing a dialogue about healthcare and access concerns. Other workshops, taught by clinical and community experts, addressed assistive technology, parenting challenges, bladder management issues, spinal cord injury, health, mental health, community resources, sexuality, and end-of-life care. Students also participated in pre- and post-interclerkship self-assessments that rated their families and their community advocates, sharing a dialogue about their loved one’s: 

1. I am aware of the challenges that people with disabilities may experience when they seek medical care. 
2. I am aware of the challenges that family members of people with disabilities may experience when they seek medical care. 
3. I know how to access information on resources (such as community services, family supports, etc.) which would be relevant to patients with disabilities. 
4. I know how to access information on resources (such as community services, family supports, etc.) which would be relevant to patients with disabilities. 

Conclusion: Students self-assessment of their attributes, knowledge and skills changed significantly (p < 0.001) on both pre-test and post-test regardless of their prior level of disability experience type.

Positive Outcomes and Strong Student Feedback

This single-day Interclerkship improved first year medical students’ self-assessment of knowledge, attitudes, and skills related to providing appropriate medical care for disabled patients. 89% of participating students agreed that this Interclerkship provided new knowledge and skills not covered elsewhere in medical education and 97% agreed that this topic is essential to their training as physicians. Students offered many favorable comments about the experience, excerpted below:

"This was a really good way to learn; it was great to have patients' experiences. Relevant to future training.

"I liked the stories about real patients and how different accommodations helped one to work with them.

"Good to have patients' experiences. Relevant to future training."

"One of the best Interclerkships. Good small groups."

"Definitely important to shift through the process of making no assumptions about a person with disabilities, to view their specific (individual) challenges and desires, rather than pigeonhole them into a group. This was overall a GREAT day, thank you."

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the individuals and their families and the complement of students who shared their stories with students in this Interclerkship. We are grateful to the many faculty from UMass Medical School, the Massachusetts Department of Mental Retardation, and from the community who participated in Interclerkship workshops and facilitated the small group dialogues between students and patients.