Meeting Challenges in Caring for Patients with Disabilities: An Interclerkship Course

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MEETING CHALLENGES IN CARING FOR PATIENTS WITH DISABILITIES: AN INTERCLERKSHIP COURSE
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Abstract
The significance of having appropriate knowledge and skills in addressing the medical care needs of patients with disabilities has long been acknowledged. The development of an Interclerkship course at our medical school provides added insights on teaching strategies to improve medical care delivery. This Interclerkship will enable students to:
1. Appraise the impact of disabilities on medical care delivery.
2. Understand the scope of urinary incontinence in disabled populations.
3. Consider the role of different education strategies in improving medical care delivery.
4. Appreciate the impact of disabilities on other medical issues.
5. Understand the role of different education strategies in improving medical care delivery.

Overview and Background
Since 1995-1996, Interclerkships—short, intensive 1-day courses interspersed between clerkships—have introduced 3rd-year UMass medical students to subjects that transcend traditional biomedical disciplines. Interclerkship sessions were initially intended to combine basic science, clinical, psychological, legal and ethical perspectives on topics historically underrepresented in medical education. Interclerkships emphasize acquisition of new knowledge and skills not previously taught in the medical curriculum.

Working with Patients with Disabilities in the Clinical Setting: Learning Objectives
This Interclerkship will enable students to:
1. Approach situations involving physical and cognitive disabilities in a manner that builds trust and confidence.
2. Appreciate the challenges that patients with disabilities and their families experience when they seek medical care.
3. Anticipate potential social, psychological, and medical issues related to patient care and work as partners with their patients to maximize health outcomes.
4. Modify the clinical encounter when necessary to work with a person with a disability.
5. Identify resources in the community.

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Working with People with Disabilities in the Clinical Setting: Learning Objectives

Objective: To provide new information on diabetes care.

Methodology:
Training: A single-day Interclerkship successfully improved third year medical students’ knowledge, attitudes, skills and confidence in addressing patients with diabetes.

Results:
A single-day Interclerkship successfully improved third year medical students’ knowledge, skills, and confidence in addressing diabetes.

Conclusion:
There was a highly significant (p<0.001) pre-to-post improvement in students’ knowledge, skills, and confidence in addressing diabetes.

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