Evidence-Based Medicine Instruction in Integrative Medical School Curricula: A Tale of Two Libraries

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Evidence-Based Medicine in Integrative Medical School Curricula: A Tale of Two Libraries*

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Our Mutual Friends

The Curricula

UMMS: U Mass Medical currently follows a traditional curriculum. Students engage in two years of basic sciences followed by two years of clinical sciences. While students in the science years do indeed receive some exposure to the clinical setting through courses such as Patient and Physician in Society, there is still a pronounced divide between the content of the first two science years and the last two clinical years.

HMS: HMS has just finished two rounds of curriculum reform. The latest, completed in 2008, seeks to increase integration of the basic sciences, population studies and clinical medicine through longitudinal exposure to a multidisciplinary curriculum that develops in content and expectations with the students over four years. Course tutorials have adopted this model and provide the venue for library instruction.

Great Expectations

What the Future May Hold

UMMS: With a new integrated curriculum expected to begin in AV 2012, the library looks forward to the possibility of expanding its role as instructors of EBM across the four years. Multiple members of the library staff are participating in curriculum redesign initiatives with this target as one goal.

HMS: With the newly revised integrated curriculum in place, the library is expanding its current offerings. Additional collaborators include the Clinical Epidemiology, Patient/Doctor II, and Core Clerkship courses. The library would like to work with students in the classroom particularly with direct hands-on EBM and information literacy instruction.

The “Librarian” on the Hearth

To effectively practice evidence-based medicine, physicians must have the knowledge and skills to find the highest quality information available. Academic health sciences librarians are uniquely suited to teach these skills and thus assist in the instruction of future clinicians. Librarians can make a valuable contribution to their institution’s educational mission regardless of the current structure of the curriculum.

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* With apologies to Charles Dickens