Creating Successful and Innovative Geriatrics Clerkship Programs: Geriatrics Success Stories at UNTHSC/TCOM and UMDNJ/SOM

TCOM’s 4th Year Mandatory 1 Month Geriatrics Clerkship
2002, the Texas Legislature through recommendations from the Texas Silver Haired Legislature convened a Commission to Study Geriatrics Education within all of the Medical Schools in Texas.

This commission recommended to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board that *geriatrics education be integrated throughout all four years of undergraduate medical school education.*

This integration was *to include a mandatory clinical geriatrics experience* exposing all medical students to continuum of care experiences prior to medical school graduation.
2003 A *mandatory 4th year, 4 week Core Geriatrics rotation* was created to allow all TCOM osteopathic medical students to experience the continuum of geriatrics care that includes:

- Ambulatory Clinics,
- Nursing Homes,
- Assisted Living,
- House Calls,
- Hospice Care
- Palliative Medicine
TCOM Core Geriatrics Experience
133 Hours of Geriatrics Addressing 61 Geriatrics Competencies Areas

**Didactics:** 7 Hours
- Pain Management,
- Falls,
- Pharmacology,
- Dementia,
- Pharmacological/Non-Pharmacological Treatment Dementia
- Medicare and Insurance Negotiating Care Options

**Clinical Geriatrics Experience:** 112 Hours
- Long Term Care,
- Nursing Homes,
- Ambulatory Care,
- Palliative Medicine,
- Hospice Care,
- Home Visits

**Journal Article Presentations:** 3 Hours

**Monthly Geriatrics Case Conference:** 1 Hour

**Monthly Geriatrics Board Review:** 1 Hour

**Monthly Geriatrics Journal Club:** 1 Hour
Innovative Approach to EOL/Ethics: 2 Hours

Student observations and interaction with the death of patients in both professional and personal contexts are expressed through narrative essays.

Project Outcomes

Helps students process their own grief experiences so as to improve their ability to help patients as they are dying and their families before and after the patient’s death occurs.

Underscores the value of narrative writing enriching students’ ability to practice humanistic medicine in geriatric and primary care practice.
Purpose: To improve interpersonal and communication skills.

Goals: To assess a geriatric patient’s health literacy, to educate and counsel patients with an emphasis on preventive medicine and health promotion based on best medical evidence.

Objectives:
Utilize best evidence to determine appropriate screening, health promotion, and/or disease prevention for older adults, communities and populations at a level commensurate with the patient’s health literacy.

Provide written and verbal communication to older adults on health promotion and/or disease prevention.

Conduct a brief geriatric assessment technique or tool.

How it Works: Small groups of 4th year medical students are assigned a preventive medicine and health promotion topic to present to a local Sr. Citizens Center.

An educational handout and verbal presentation are provided by the students in non-technical language.

When appropriate a targeted geriatric assessment is provided.

The presentation is reviewed by geriatrics faculty prior to the presentation and feedback is provided to the students after the presentation.
Purpose: Improve the accuracy of creating a differential diagnosis for a geriatric patient’s clinical condition.

Goal: To develop and rank order appropriate differential diagnosis of geriatric patients’ clinical problems.

Objectives: Utilize a student/patient worksheet to support a more meaningful interaction between the student and patient such that the student can refine their diagnosis, treatment, and management capabilities.

How it Works: Students select two patient encounters during their core geriatrics clerkship rotation.

The student completes the worksheet addressing the patient’s problem and/or geriatric syndrome including a listing of differential diagnoses and ranking the likelihood of these.

Once the student has worked through the differential diagnosis and established their identified diagnosis, treatment plan, and management plan they review the completed worksheets with their assigned attending and receive feedback.
Purpose:
To Emphasize clinical skills development in Osteopathic Principles & Practice and Osteopathic Manipulative Treatment with older adults.

2 Hours:
1 Hour Instruction
1 Hour Practice on Volunteer Seniors
Geriatrics Clerkship Evaluation
Feedback from Students

- “This rotation filled in a lot of blanks for me when dealing with this population and teaching me about Medicare, government programs, pain management, and end of life care.”

- “I appreciated the opportunity to become more familiar with Alzheimer’s medicines and methods of testing and living with the disease.”

- “I think this rotation has opened my eyes as to what hospice, long term care and geriatrics really is.”

- “Hospice care is a very emotional rotation, I would highly recommend it for understanding death & dying & being part of that process with patients.”
### Geriatrics Clerkship Evaluation

**Pre/Post Student Competency Self-Assessment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Ability to Perform This Competency</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Demonstrate professionalism and a caring attitude in working with older adults and in particular frail elderly</td>
<td>No Ability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Conduct medication reviews and evaluate appropriateness considering creatinine clearance, medications interactions and side effects</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Describe geriatric syndromes: dementia, polypharmacy, incontinence, dementia versus delirium, depression, iatrogenic problems including prolonged bedrest, foley catheter use, falls, osteoporosis, sensory impairment including hearing loss, visual impairment, immobility and gait impairment, failure to thrive, pressure ulcers, osteoarthritis and functional capacity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Integrate osteopathic principles and practice into the care of geriatric patients</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Demonstrate knowledge about the community resources available for older adults to assist with caregiving</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Demonstrate understanding of when it is appropriate to refer for counseling and neuropsychological testing</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Demonstrate knowledge regarding end of life care and be able to discuss the use of feeding tube, appropriate hospice referral and pain therapy</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Describe the continuum of care, including nursing homes, assisted living, skilled nursing unit and home care services</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Perform a home safety evaluation to assess the danger posed by throw rugs, furniture, unsafe floor plan, etc.</td>
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Students take this assessment at the beginning of the Clerkship and again at the end of the Clerkship to assess geriatrics competency gains.
Geriatrics Clerkship Evaluation
Pre/Post Student Competency Self-Assessment

UUNTHSC TCOM Geriatrics Clerkship Pre-test/Post-test Competency Results Academic Year 2011-2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clerkship Average Score</th>
<th>PRE</th>
<th>POST</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professionalism</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>3.56</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medication Reviews</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>2.92</td>
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<tr>
<td>Geriatric Syndromes</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>3.06</td>
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<tr>
<td>Osteopathic Principles</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>2.72</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Resources</td>
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<td>2.77</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neuropsychological Testing</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>3.04</td>
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<tr>
<td>End of Life Care</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>2.96</td>
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<tr>
<td>Continuum of Care</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>2.88</td>
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<tr>
<td>Home Safety Evaluation</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>2.43</td>
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<tr>
<td>OVERALL</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>2.93</td>
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Data Collection through Clerkship Period 20, 2011-2012
UNTHSC Reynolds Geriatric Education and Training in Texas (GET-IT) Program
Visit our website at:

www.hsc.unt.edu/Sites/GETIT/