

INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE AREA OF CONCENTRATION

Recently, several national panels, including the Institute of Medicine, have explored the role of integrative medicine approaches in health care and education, with encouragement to strengthen the educational and research basis of this field as a means to address concerns in the health care system. Similarly, studies of medical students reflect a greater interest in this area, as compared to limited educational options. Specifically, there is a strong Integrative Health Interest Group at UPSOM with participation in events by as many as 25-50 students. The National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine has awarded a T35 grant to the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at UPSOM, for an ICAM Rehabilitation Research Summer Program, with the first five students participating for the summer of 2010. There are a number of faculty at the University of Pittsburgh and UPSOM who are involved in education, clinical services, and research in integrative and complementary therapies.

GOALS

This AOC provides an opportunity for future physicians, no matter their career choice, to:

- Explore and train in integrative medicine as well as conduct scholarly review and investigation of ICAM contributing to evidence based medicine
- Develop tools that can provide a foundation of knowledge and skills that can be used in caring for one's-self as well as allowing the physician-in-training to counsel patients appropriately regarding complementary modalities and self-care practices

PROGRAM COMPONENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Similar to other AOC's, the core features of the program include a didactic component – most commonly centering around a journal club format; an experiential component – providing an opportunity for students to explore the impact of these approaches personally; and an AOC project – which in most cases will also be the student's scholarly project.

Didactic Component: There is a monthly educational activity; considerations include a journal club format, the combination of a journal club with a workshop, a workshop, and a guest or visiting professor lecture. Most months, the hub of the activity is a journal club on a specific CAM modality or approach. When appropriate, this will be combined with a small workshop or activity illustrating the approach. Additionally, students will participate in a 3rd or 4th year elective in Integrative Medicine.

Experiential Component: The goal of this activity is to acquaint the student with the personal impact of employing complementary therapies and other health promoting practices. This has two components:

- Attendance at two events per year that allow students to experience CAM modalities with students keeping a log of these events and noting their experiences.

- Students will complete a yearly appraisal of personal goals in the area of health promotion, disease prevention, and coping with demands and stressors; discussing measures they would like to take in the coming year; and noting any obstacles they may face in accomplishing these tasks. After the 1st year, students are asked to reflect on how their previous plans went and make any changes to goals and plans for the following year. Regardless of whether or not students are able to implement any personal changes or wellness activities, this task is expected to help students gain an appreciation of the difficulties our patients face with making health behavior changes.

AOC Project: This parallels the requirements for the Scholarly Project and our assumption is that for most students the AOC and Scholarly project will be the same. One option is that students in the AOC are welcome to apply for one of the five spots in the ICAM Rehabilitation Research Summer Program or one of the other similar funded projects that typically occur between the 1st and 2nd year. Students could undertake another research project, either funded or unfunded. Another option would be an educational or service-oriented project. It is expected that there will be some carry-over of the program through the four years and students are expected to present a summary of their project to the AOC during their senior year.

Faculty Mentorship: The executive committee of the AOC includes: Dr's. Glick, Dicianno, Muldoon, and Balk. Dr. Dicianno is primarily responsible for a student's AOC project and helping a student find a mentor whose background fits with the student's interests. There are a number of Pitt faculty who have agreed to participate in this AOC and we will also call on some of the faculty involved in the T35 grant. Additionally, other Pitt-Med and Health Sciences faculty may be involved depending on their skills and background and the student's interest.

Evaluation: The executive committee is responsible for ensuring that students stay current with requirements for attendance and participation in activities. Documentation will include logs of attendance at activities such as journal club as well as ensuring regular feedback from faculty mentors that students are progressing on their AOC project and wellness requirements. When needed individuals from the Executive Committee or the faculty mentor will counsel the students if they are falling short of the requirements.

AOC DIRECTORS

Ronald Glick, MD

Brad Dicianno, MD