BACKGROUND

• Historically, draping techniques have taken a secondary seat to other physical exam skills taught in our first year Normal Physical Exam Course. Fourth year students, who mentor the first year students in this course have taught techniques occasionally, but inconsistently. SPs have given draping feedback when there is time. We discovered that students consistently report that they crave more feedback on patient comfort and draping, according to our end-of-session student evaluations.

• A search of available resources showed that there was little information on the basics of draping during a normal physical exam. Videos on basic physical exam skills did not include draping.

• In 2007 a perfunctory draping demonstration was given to students in the lecture hall immediately before performing a physical exam with SP’s for their first time.

• Although this had its benefits, the flaws of this method were evident. The need for staff and SPs to demonstrate, and time pressure created by the challenge of running tests in 16 exam rooms at the same time caused a physical demonstration to be prohibitive.

• It was decided that students would better learn the basics of draping before their first SP physical exam encounter so that they would have time to visualize and practice the techniques.

PURPOSE

• Properly draping a patient during the physical exam has the proven benefits of providing warmth, comfort, respect, and increased trust in the physician-patient relationship. It is a simple matter once you have seen the techniques and learned the principles.

• Practice of technique ahead of time increases the students’ confidence during the physical exams, and likewise increases the patient’s satisfaction with the exams.

METHOD

• Our solution was to create a comprehensive video on draping the patient during the physical exam. In 2008 this video was made available to students ahead of testing time in the lecture hall prior to students performing their first physical exam on SPs. It is only 7 minutes long and gives the students comprehensive and reliable information that they can use in a variety of patient care settings.

• Each year after this exam, SPs are asked to give students written feedback on what went well and areas for improvement.

• Each year students are asked what three things on which they would most like to receive feedback.

RESULTS

Figure 1 shows the percent of positive comments given by SPs that related to students’ draping techniques in 2007 before the draping video was developed, and in 2008 after the video was utilized.

As the figure shows, SPs gave more than twice as many positive comments about draping techniques in 2008 than in 2007.

• Figures 2 and 3 show the topics that students expressed interest in wanting feedback on in 2007 and 2008, respectively, according to post-testing student evaluations.

CONCLUSIONS

• Once techniques and principles have been witnessed, draping is a straightforward skill. However, it does require familiarity and practice in order to achieve mastery.

• Clear communication of expectations and consistent instruction has helped the first year class of 2008, as indicated by standardized patient checklist data taken from the physical exam.

• In 2009 we plan to post the draping video on the student educational site (Navigator) so that the students of all years can access the material for reference.

• We look forward to second year test scores which will indicate whether or not students are incorporating this newly taught skill year to year.