Family Medicine Clerkship Patient Panel Management

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BACKGROUND

Clerkship students enthusiastic about working in Family Medicine (FM) suggested that the clerkship provide opportunity for multiple interactions with the *same patient*. Many students view familiarity with patients as one of the appeals of family medicine. While this is difficult to achieve with real patient encounters over the course of the clerkship, it is quite feasible with offsite SPs calling into the clerkship locations.
As a result of this feedback , students are now scheduled to practice telephone and medicine management with Standardized Patients (SPs).
The clerkship director built the activity around the Principles of the Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH) which is a theory of patient care based in whole person, physician directed practices.

OBJECTIVES

The goals of this exercise are:

- to provide the students with a lifelike opportunity to deal with common concerns of patients that must be managed over the phone.
- Allow the students practice in reading lab values, emails, etc. for the patients (SPs).
- Enable students to act as "residents" for the sake of practice in that role for the four weeks of their clerkship.

METHOD

SP Management:

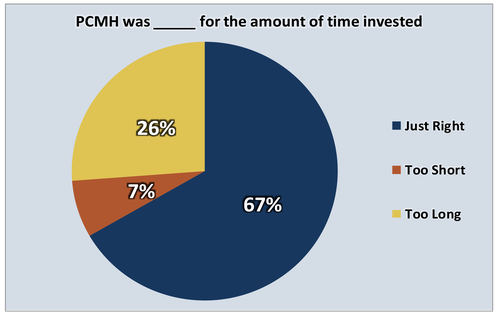
- SPs are able to remain at home (or anywhere with computer access) for this activity.
- Each SP makes between 5 and 6 calls during a one-hour time frame to the fictional "Steeler Nation Family Health Center".
- Prior to the activity, the clerkship coordinator e-mails each assigned SP a start time, a list and sequence of call numbers.
- Each case has learning objectives that the SP tracks on a checklist for each student call. The checklist is completed via METI Learning Space and, subsequently, a report is sent to the family medicine office.

Exercise Weekly Content:

Week #1: Students are introduced to their patients by reading through paper versions of the patient's charts, patient history, current issues, and previously sent e-mails.
Week #2: "Isabella Crashaw", 19yo wants to know results of STD cultures taken last week and **"Eleanor Campion",** 26yo, first pregnancy, 39 weeks and thinks her water has broken.
Week #3: "Isabella Crashaw",19yo, positive chlamydia, now has shortness of breath and **"Darlene Browne",**54yo recently seen for a knee injury; calling about her 2yo grandson's fever.
Week#4:"Eleanor Campion", gave birth to healthy girl last week. Today she is calling with fever and swollen breast.
"Fred Wright", 32yo prescribed Prozac, calls today following up on email wanting to switch from Prozac to Xanax.

RESULTS

- **21.4%** of all students surveyed suggested the PCMH was "particularly positive".
- **66.6%** of those surveyed suggested the PCMH was "Just Right" for the amount of time invested.



LIMITATIONS

The following coordination issues were identified :

- Accuracy and clarity of schedule is essential
- Timing of phone calls ; some site phone lines were busy or non-functioning unexpectedly.
- Strategies to problem solve trouble spots must be decided in advance and shared with Sps.
- Time limitations due to other student clerkship responsibilities continues to be a limitation.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- The clerkship plans to continue the phone management exercises through the next year based on positive student feedback such as **:** "The PCMH exercises really allowed me to practice medicine in a way very conducive to learning."
- Strive to develop inter-professional cases which allow medical students to practice having telephone communications with other health care providers.

1. The Beneficial Impact of Patient-Centered Primary Care on Costs and Quality. http://www.acponline.org/advocacy/events/state_of_healthcare/statehc07_7.pdf

2. Grumbach K., Bodenheimer T., Grundy P. The Outcomes of Implementing Patient-Centered Medical Home Interventions: A Review of the Evidence on Quality, Access and Costs from Recent Prospective Evaluation Studies, August 2009.

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