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ABSTRACT

INTEGRATED CASE FORMAT AS A NOVEL WAY TO TEACH MUSCULOSKELETAL MEDICINE.

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STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM: It has always been a challenge to present musculoskeletal medicine in a relevant, interesting manner in the medical school curriculum. Because many of the diseases are obscure and not well understood, students often enter the clinical years with limited understanding. During the clinical years, many of the diseases are seen rarely, again limiting exposure. The new curriculum in the CASE Medical School provides for a unique opportunity to integrate the teaching of musculoskeletal medicine allowing for the development of a group of future physicians who will be better able to recognize some of the more common problems seen in both rheumatology and orthopedics.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT: The goals of this project are to develop material for the musculoskeletal curriculum. Given the wide array of available computer generated techniques including simulation and models, there is much opportunity to devise novel learning tools in addition to the traditional small group cases. Many scenarios can be developed at differing levels of complexity. Given the innovative nature of the new curriculum changes, use of non-traditional approaches to learning and integration of the basic and clinical sciences affords a unique learning environment with opportunity for exploration in ways not previously possible.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT: This project focuses on the development of cases to be used within the medical curriculum during the musculoskeletal/neurology/psychiatry block. As this will be the last block before entering the clinical years, it presents a unique opportunity to integrate material presented earlier in the pre-clinical curriculum. The major emphasis is on integration and development of novel formats in which the material can be presented.

Examples include:

Case 1: Immunosuppressed patient with lupus presenting with confusion and psychotic features allows exploration of the manifestations of SLE, common psychiatric disorders, possible side effects of corticosteroid use as well as infectious complications of immunosuppression.

Case 2: Simulated patient who is immunocompromised status post renal transplant presents with an inflamed knee, and using computer simulation, students aspirate the joint, analyze the results of the joint fluid, and embark on a plan of treatment.

FURTHER QUESTIONS TO BE ADDRESSED: Outcome measures will be important to assess the success of the exercises. What format is best to use for evaluation?

(1) focus groups, (2) testing of objective knowledge based on multiple choice questions, (3) integration of knowledge in open book self-evaluation questions, (4) OSCE format examinations, (5) other more innovative formats.

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