Patients as People: How Physicians Learn to Listen

The zero credit elective is available to all CWRU medical students in Years 1 and 2. It is designed to enable future physicians to connect with patients on a human level. It is based in Neurology, Neuropathology, and Neurosciences, but it will inform the patient-doctor relationship regardless of specialty. The structure is combination of a series of meetings with a person in the community who is living with early-stage, mild to moderate dementia, and discussion and didactic sessions, spread over 7 months (September-November and January-April). After being assigned a participating “buddy” (choice and matching procedure described elsewhere), the students will set up a visit schedule of approximately 2 hours per month. Buddies will be chosen from clinics of UH Neurologists and from local dementia service agencies such as the Alzheimer’s Association. Students will complete a structured journal entry after each visit. Once a month students will meet as a group with supervisors for a 2-hour lecture and discussion session. Lectures topics may include basic science topics related to dementia, intergenerational learning, the patient as a person, genetics of aging, taking care of an aging parent, family dynamics, narrative medicine, and emotional intelligence. Lecturers will come from SOM departments or other appropriate colleges within the university (see list below).

Didactic lectures and tentative presenters - 2 hours per month:

1. Intergenerational learning (Dr. Peter Whitehouse)
2. The patient as person (Dr. Alan Lerner)
3. Genetics of aging
4. Taking care of an aging parent
5. Family dynamics
6. Narrative medicine
7. Emotional intelligence (Richard Boyatzis, PhD)

Students must complete 35 contact hours: lecture, facilitated review sessions, patient contact: 2 hours of orientation; meet with buddy 3 hours per month plus 30 minutes facilitated reflection on journal entries once a month, for 6 months (Sep-Nov and Feb-Apr), 3 hours + 30 minutes meeting monthly x 6 months during first semester (21 hours); seven 2-hr didactic and discussion sessions (14 hours); total 35 hours.

You will be assessed based on participation in facilitated sessions and on completion of the buddy visits. Students will need a flexible schedule to set up time to meet with the buddy.

Goals:

To increase awareness of the daily life of people and families living with dementia. Expose students to broader issues raised by dementia including aging, family dynamics, and resource utilization.

Objectives:

After completing a series of visits with a person with dementia and completing journal entries for each visit and attending lectures the student will:
1) be able to explain the link between psychosocial events and biology when discussing journal entries and during lecture sessions.
2) describe the difficulties faced by patients and their caregivers
3) explain the role of social interaction in the care of dementia patients

Sponsored by Robert B. Petersen, PhD, Professor of Pathology, Neuroscience, and Neurology at Case Western Reserve University.

REGISTRATION:

Course begins Fall 2016.

To register for this non-clinical, zero credit elective please contact Frances Lissemore, PhD at fml2@case.edu or 216-844-5606. There are six spots available per session.