

Evaluation of the U of L SOM Pediatric Externship Program: Prepared as a Class Project for ELFH 606-76, Program Planning and Evaluation

Abstract:

An in-depth program evaluation of the Summer Pediatric Externship Program, offered to rising 2nd year medical students, was conducted for the University of Louisville School of Medicine (U of L SOM) Department of Pediatrics by the students and faculty in the spring, 2007, Health Science Campus (HSC) section of ELFH 606-76, Program Planning and Evaluation. This graduate/ post-graduate course is part of the Certificate in Health Professions Education (CHPE) curriculum.

The five major data sources for the evaluation were:

- Program overview and records of student participation supplied by the Department of Pediatrics
- National and institutional residency selection data from the National Resident Match Program
- An original web-based survey instrument to measure perceptions of past participants
- An original web-based survey to measure perceptions of potential (summer 2007) participants
- A search of academic literature.



When asked to describe the most meaningful event in their Externship, past participants were truly eloquent in sharing descriptions of moments from the everyday (i.e. the first opportunity I had to see an actual patient) to the profound (i.e. witnessing the death of a patient who could not be saved). The overarching theme of the qualitative finding was "a lasting first impression" of pediatrics.



Outcomes:

The overall impression of the program was very positive. Participation in the Pediatric Externship has been at or near capacity (20 students) since its inception in 1997. The response rate to the online survey of past participants was exceptionally good (57.39%). One hundred percent of those surveyed reported "enjoying the experience", and 78.8% would "recommend it to other students". More than 96% either agreed or strongly agreed that "faculty showed interest in me as a learner." The value of early clinical exposure was confirmed with 25.9% of participants earning third year clerkship honors (compared to 10-11% of a typical medical school class).

The four-week duration of the program was found to be appropriate; and the stipend, while appreciated, was not the deciding factor that made students apply for the internship.

The program appears to have led 41.3% of those surveyed to choose pediatrics as their primary area of practice. When asked if the program prepares students for their 3rd year clerkship, 89.4% agreed or strongly agreed that it did.

Research Team (in Alphabetical order)

Karen D. Boone, BSN, RN, PhD Student
Stephanie Lynn Garrett, MD, FACP
Amy L. Holthouser, MD
Melissa Pinto-Foltz, BSN, RN, PhD Student
Stephen Rhodes, DMD
Monica A. Shaw, MD
Anita V. Shelgikar, MD
Lori W. Wagner, MD, FACP

With Supporting Faculty: Karen Hughes Miller, PhD (course director)

Muriel Harris, PhD
Deby Armstrong, PhD
Gail Haynes, MEd

Project client:
Pradip D. Patel, MD,
Associate Professor
Director for Undergraduate Pediatric Medical
Education
Department of Pediatrics

This course was awarded a 2007 Kentuckiana Metroversity Award for Instructional Development, and an article to share the program model is now in progress.