A Longitudinal Course in Positive Professionalism for Preclinical Medical Students

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Rationale
- Physician unprofessional behavior seen as early as start of medical school 1,2
- Current curriculum lacks focus on positive professional behavior
- Professionalism is a nationally recognized area of development in health professions education 3,4,5
- LCME accredited schools have recognized importance of professionalism education
- Improving professional behavior could increase patient, learner, and practitioner satisfaction as well as decrease disciplinary action and litigation 1,2,6
- Our Virtuous Student Physician curriculum requires active reinforcement throughout medical school training

Curriculum Objectives

The overall goal for the curriculum is that third year students, when interacting with patients, staff, and colleagues, demonstrate in their observable behavior the attributes of the Virtuous Student Physician.

Objectives are linked to the Six Virtues or Attributes:
- Respect for Others
- Honesty
- Compassion
- Competence
- Social Responsibility
- Professional Responsibility

SAMPLE OBJECTIVE FOR Social Responsibility
Within the framework of “Social Responsibility” from “The Virtuous Student Physician,” students will write a self-assessment - describing their understanding of “Social Responsibility” - providing examples of relevant past behavior - creating a plan for future professional activity demonstrating “Social Responsibility” - If the student has performed an activity identified as a “Significant Achievement in Social Responsibility” during the first two years of medical school, then the student will also describe that activity and explain its relevance

Description of Curriculum

Curriculum Content

Module format:
- Definition of the attribute
- Common issues involving the attribute
- Self-assessment
- Significant achievements for students

Common issues involving that attribute will include:

Respect for others:
- Personal respect: privacy, confidentiality, humility
- Respect for groups: race, gender, nationality, beliefs
- Respect for colleagues and health professionals

Honesty:
- Trust from patients & society, accuracy, research data, academic integrity

Compassion:
- Empathy for patients, colleagues in challenging situations

Competence:
- Medical knowledge and skill, recognizing limitations, patient safety

Social Responsibility:
- Race, gender, culture, beliefs, socioeconomic status

Professional Responsibility:
- Personal conduct, role of a profession, personal vs. clinical responsibility

Sample module

Table 1. SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY OBJECTIVE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Application</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Res</td>
<td>Master Physician’s description of Social Responsibility (Appendix A)</td>
<td>Online presentation as the definition of “Social Responsibility”</td>
<td>Demonstrate willingness to offer clinical care to underserved populations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Res</td>
<td>Medical Students’ description of Social Responsibility (Appendix B)</td>
<td>Online presentation on the definition of “Social Responsibility”</td>
<td>Online presentation on the definition of “Social Responsibility”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Res</td>
<td>Examples of different situations, issues, and Social Responsibility</td>
<td>Online presentation on the definition of “Social Responsibility”</td>
<td>Online presentation on the definition of “Social Responsibility”</td>
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<td>Res</td>
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Current professionalism education often framed in identification of negative behaviors, with little attention to promotion of positive professional behaviors or attitudes. This curriculum is designed to promote positive professionalism by identifying, promoting, and rewarding positive professionalism behaviors.

Online, modular format promotes ease of learner access, and flexibility with the material.

Use of badges can promote recognition of professional conduct in peers and self-recognition.

This is one method for providing a longitudinal positive professional curriculum focused on improving behavior and attitudes.

References: