



Service-Learning Course On Falls Prevention Organized by Learning Communities

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Background

- Older adults are a growing patient population and thus it is critical medical students have ample exposure to caring for the elderly population
- This program integrated basic science courses with the service-learning portion of Population, Patient, Physician, and Professional, course
- Learning Communities were divided into teams of 6 for the project

Program Description

- Over a 6-month period teams met with older adults individually at their nursing home or assisted-living facility
- Each meeting correlated to a new organ system in basic science curriculum
- During visit students:
 - Interviewed older adult on life experiences
 - Completed fall risks assessment screenings
 - Recorded data via online questionnaires



- Compiled information into a presentation
- Teams of 6 presented to their learning community and one other learning community
- Presented fall risks identified and social history of older adult
- Students answered questions from faculty and other students

Program Evaluation

- Each learning community was graded by the other learning community they presented to
- A biography was created by the students using the information obtained during the interview with the older adult and given to the older adult as a thank you
- Environmental fall risks identified by students were shared with the facilities

Program Objectives

- Students building rapport with older adults
- Recognizing Fall risks associated with each of the organ systems
- Recognizing environmental factors associated with falls and how to lower risk
- Understanding older adult lifestyle in a nursing home or assisted living facility

Discussion

- Students gained experience interviewing older adults and building rapport in a relaxed environment
- Gained insight into determinants of fall risks in older adults
- Students learned how screening tools can help identify potential patient and environmental fall risks

Conclusion

- This program can be replicated by other medical schools who want to increase exposure to the elderly population and have students better understand fall risks