

7th Annual Interclerkship Day: Improving Patient Safety

January 4, 2010

The 7th Annual Interclerkship Day on Improving Patient Safety was a unique opportunity for Jefferson Medical College's (JMC) 3rd year students to explore their own attitudes and beliefs about medical error and patient safety, while benefiting from lessons learned from the aviation model of crew resource management and its application to medicine. Sponsored by Office of the Dean of JMC and the Jefferson School of Population Health (JSPH), the program was moderated by David B. Nash, MD, MBA, the Dean of JSPH. The day opened with a welcome from Michael J. Vergare, MD, Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs.

The keynote speaker was internationally known aviation safety expert, John J. Nance, JD. Nance is a founding board member of the National Patient Safety Foundation; a former airline pilot; and a broadcast analyst on aviation for ABC News. He presented compelling evidence illustrating how medicine can use crew resource management (CRM) principles from the airline industry to improve patient safety and increase professionalism. He emphasized the importance of communication and the creation of an environment and culture that allows a junior team member to actively participate and speak up if something is amiss. This type of environment fosters teamwork while ultimately improving patient safety.

The application of CRM in the medical environment via medical simulation was presented by David Lindquist, MD, FACEP,

Assistant Professor of Emergency Medicine at the Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University. Dr. Lindquist shared tools and techniques that can easily be used in most situations. He also showed simulation videos that are used to educate healthcare professionals about communication practices and improve leadership and team behaviors.

Following the morning presentations, students had the opportunity to listen to Gregory C. Kane, MD, Professor of Medicine, Residency Program Director and Vice Chairman in the Department of Medicine, during a luncheon presentation. Dr. Kane gave a very encouraging and supporting vote of confidence to the students by giving them permission to speak up and be an integral part of the quality and safety solution.

The afternoon program opened with a panel discussion, and question and answer session that focused on family and patient perspectives. The first panelist, Jay Scott, Executive Director of Alex's Lemonade Stand shared an emotional story about the initial time period when his daughter Alex first developed symptoms of her disease and the frustrations encountered by his family when trying to get a diagnosis, appropriate care, and effective treatment. It was a moving story which revealed the shortcomings of the medical system and highlighted opportunities for improvement. Mr. Scott's take-home message for the students was to **listen**. The second panelist, Linda Kinney, Executive Director and President of Medically Induced Trauma Support Services, Inc. (MITSS),

in Massachusetts, shared a very personal story of how a medical error impacted her health and her family. Although she endured a very frightening event, she was able to use this experience to develop a platform that advocates for patients and families. She is also very interested in supporting providers by helping them to understand the cathartic nature of apology. An interesting twist developed in Ms. Kinney's story. She gained a great deal of support and interest from the physician responsible for the error in her case and he went on to become an advocate and active member of her organization.

It can be very difficult to communicate a bad outcome to patients and families. Jason Baxter, MD, MSCP, Assistant Professor in the Division of Maternal-Fetal Medicine, offered a very interactive presentation and dynamic exchange with the audience that helped to characterize the elements of a successful encounter with patients and families. Through the use of case scenarios and student involvement in role-plays, the audience observed important skills, actions, language, and non-verbal cues which enhance the provider-patient encounter and lead to patient satisfaction.

This particular clerkship program provides an important venue for integrating patient safety issues into educational programming for JMC students and it will continue to thrive in future years to come. ■