

Meet an IPE Student Champion from Thomas Jefferson University Nick Safian, Sidney Kimmel Medical College, M2

Briefly describe your work with/related to JCIPE:

Last semester, I participated in the Alzheimer's Virtual Interprofessional Training (AVIT). AVIT uses a virtual world computer program to simulate a variety of cases and encounters with patients with dementia. Our team consisted of a medical student, pharmacy student, and physical therapy student. Each week we simulated a different case while also taking turns in different roles of the simulation—patient, caregiver, physician, pharmacist, nurse, certified nursing assistant, etc. Each simulation also took place in a different setting of the virtual world, from the patient's home, to the pharmacist's office, to a nursing home. The virtual world (which is sort of like the computer game "The Sims", except for dementia care) allowed us to experience a lot of the complexities that can arise when caring for a patient with dementia. For instance, in one case, the patient is resisting taking a shower at their nursing home, and the CNA has to get the patient to agree to shower. As you can imagine, tensions and difficulties arise just like they would in a real case. AVIT provided us with an opportunity to explore how to approach those types of situations.

What excites you about this work?

It's awesome that Jefferson is thinking about new ways to approach training for dementia care with AVIT. We learn about these topics in the classroom, but AVIT gave us the opportunity to actually apply what we've been learning. It was really cool to get a chance to experience a piece of what it might be like to provide care to a patient with dementia in the real world. Simulating the cases really forces you to take on the role of the provider, or the patient, or the caregiver, etc. and it was a great way to empathize and get a sense of what these situations are like for each of the individuals involved.

What have you learned that was new?

It was really valuable to be able to participate in the simulations



in a variety of different roles. As opposed to only playing the physician role, I also got to be the patient, the caregiver, and the nurse. Being able to experience those perspectives—ones that I otherwise would not have been exposed to—was eye-opening. Everyone brings their own expertise, experience, perspective—and even bias—to the situation. Learning that through AVIT and being able to take that with me will be really valuable as I continue my medical training.

Why is IPE/CP important to you?

A lot of the cases we simulated in AVIT were extremely complex and multifaceted. Dealing with these complexities required a true team effort. Each role provided their own perspective and expertise, both of which were crucial for addressing the issues of the case. The patients we will see in the real world will be just as—if not more—complex, and it will require just as much of a team effort to care for them. IPE puts this understanding at the center of its mission and makes sure that we are not only exposed to the importance of working to care for patients as a team of different types of medical professionals, but also gives us the opportunity to practice what working on a team to care for a patient is really like.

How do you think you will apply your IPE/CP learning to your future role?

Working on a team to care for patients is what my future role is going to be every day. That is what healthcare is. At the very least it will be a two-person team of me and the patient; in reality it will probably be a much bigger team of me, the patient, the nurses, the pharmacists, the physical therapists, the occupational therapists, and so many more. What I learned through AVIT about the importance of using that team to provide the best possible care for the patient will come in handy every day. Everyone on the team holds an important role and is there for a reason. The future of healthcare is teamwork, and my IPE learning has helped to prepare me for that future.