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Authors

Sobehart, R J
Pollock, G

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76 Communication Skills for Dummies (I Mean Doctors!): Intern Communication Skills Curriculum

Sobehart RJ, Pollock G/University of Pittsburgh Medical Center/School of Medicine, Pittsburgh, PA

Introduction/Background: Communication skills are an essential part of the physicians skill set, yet little time is spent formally developing them as a resident. They are part of the Model of the Clinical Practice of Emergency Medicine but rarely taught in a formal fashion. It is often expected that these skills will be learned by passive observation and by on the job training as residents progress through their residency. Since there is minimal medical literature on the teaching of communication skills, we thought that we could use some of the business literature to better teach our residents how to interact with their patients.

Educational Objectives: The objective of this course is to translate the practical techniques set forth by Dale Carnegie in “How to Win Friends and Influence People” into the unique work environment of emergency medicine.

Curricular Design: The instructional model follows a step-wise, three pronged approach. First the individual learners are provided the book to read and reflect upon without guidance. This is followed by a set of guided self-reflection questions based on the book, which they are to consider before the final session. The course concludes with a faculty moderated small group discussion based on the book and reflection questions. This final session allows the residents to reflect on their initial residency and medical school communication experience in light of the book and gain valuable insight from the attending faculty.

Impact/Effectiveness: This curriculum was well received in its initial iteration this past fall. It serves as the starting point for an ongoing Leadership Series that runs throughout our three year residency curriculum. While no validated evaluation has been used, the feedback has been positive and the curriculum will continue to grow and evolve in the future