PURPOSE: This paper describes geriatric-centered service learning opportunities for first and second year medical students at the University of Florida College of Medicine. The service learning opportunities are designed to address the needs of older adults, provide a rich resource for creating service learning activities, and support the development of student communication and examination skills. Students are responsible for writing, teaching, and providing the services. The objectives for the service learning projects are to:

1. Increase students' knowledge base and positive perceptions concerning the treatment of older adults.
2. Create interactive social learning activities for students with older adults in the community.
3. Increase student contact with older adults in non-medical settings.
4. Provide examples of active aging and living independently.
5. Enhance students' communication and examination skills.

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Learning Communities

Learning Communities (LC) are spaces created for 1st and 2nd year medical students that provide them access to study areas as well as provide a collaborative community for learning and socialization. Each LC comprises of a group of students that work together on their first two years of medical school. The LC fosters a sense of community and encourages groups to find the perfect opportunity for service learning projects. Faculty advisors and the Division of Student Affairs provide staffing and support for each LC.

These activities include:
- Interprofessional case discussions, crises, and rounds for students.
- Team-based learning activities.
- Service activity (1 hour) Debrief (20 min).

Evaluation of the service learning activities includes evidence of both qualitative and quantitative, including reflective written, structured course assignments, faculty, and program evaluation surveys.

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Senior Mentors

The students interviewed for this study included residents and fellows from the Department of Family Medicine, Family Medicine Residency Program. The study was conducted between Fall 2014 and Spring 2015. The purpose of this study was to explore residents' views about their experience with the back to basics mentor program. The participants were recruited through e-mail and social media. The interviews were conducted in a quiet location and lasted approximately 30 minutes. The data was analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings showed that the residents who participated in the program had positive experiences. They reported feeling more confident and prepared for their future careers. They also reported feeling more connected to their peers and mentors. The residents also reported that the program had a positive impact on their career development.

Conclusion

We have found that community-based older adults provide a rich resource for creating service learning activities. Students enjoy these interactions in their preclinical years and their roles as citizens and professionals.

Abstract

Meeting the New LCME Service Learning Need in Geriatrics

S. Baker, MA; C. Grant, CRC, EdS; L. Granville, MD; J. Lloyd, MD; A. Pomidor, MD

Florida State University College of Medicine; Department of Geriatrics; Tallahassee, Florida

This work is supported by a grant from the Donald W. Reynolds Foundation.

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