

Elective: Internal Medicine; Palliative Care

OVERVIEW

During the rotation, the medical student will learn about basic principles of palliative care management of patients with terminal illnesses and nearing the end-of-life. They will learn the principles of pain management and managing other common symptoms at the end of life, working within a multidisciplinary team

INTRODUCTION

Location(s): St. Boniface Hospital Ward, Riverview Health Centre Ward, Health Sciences Centre Consult Service

Preceptors: Palliative Care Attendings

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES (CanMEDS)

Medical Expert

As Medical Experts, physicians integrate all of the CanMEDS Roles, applying medical knowledge, clinical skills and professional attitudes in their provision of patient-centered care.

The student can expect to be actively involved in the service. This will encompass:

- Learn and apply the skills necessary to assess and provide ongoing treatment to patients receiving palliative care.
- Develop knowledge and skills related to the assessment and management of patients with severe symptom complexes (including pain, dyspnea, constipation, skin care, mouth care, terminal agitation/delirium, nausea and vomiting).
- Develop knowledge and skills in managing acute deterioration in the final stages of terminal illnesses.
- Develop proficiency in the use of opioids, especially as related to difficult to control symptoms, and their utilization in the event of a symptom crisis.
- Develop proficiency in the use of adjunct medicines in pain management.

Communicator

Physicians effectively facilitate the doctor-patient relationship and the dynamic exchanges that occur before, during, and after the medical encounter.

As Communicators, students will facilitate the doctor-patient relationship by:

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- Developing an approach to patients and their families in the event of a catastrophic medical illness that leads to death in several hours to days.
- Developing communication skills in effectively speaking with patients and families.
- Developing skills in communicating effectively with physician colleagues, specialist and other team members in both written and verbal form, including composing clear and concise discharge letter for patient's community physician and team.

Collaborator

Physicians effectively work within a healthcare team to achieve optimal patient care.

As Collaborators, students will work effectively within the multidisciplinary team to achieve optimal patient care by:

- Developing the skills necessary to work effectively with interdisciplinary team members through family conferences, team meetings, and ongoing interactions related to patient care.
- Actively participating in the discharge planning of the patient in transition from a medical institution to the home setting or to a long-term care facility.

Leader

Physicians engage with others to contribute to a vision of a high-quality health care system and take responsibility for the delivery of excellent patient care through their activities as clinicians, administrators, scholars, or teachers.

As Leaders, students will participate in the activities of the service, making decisions, allocating resources, and contributing to the effectiveness of the health care team. They will:

- Develop strategies for dealing with acute clinical situations in various care settings.
- Develop time and service management skills to ensure patient needs and the needs of the multidisciplinary team are met.

Health Advocate

Physicians responsibly use their expertise and influence to advance the health and well-being of individual patients, communities and populations.

As Health Advocates, students will responsibly use their expertise and influence to advance the health and well-being of individual patients, communities and populations:

- Demonstrate the skills necessary to negotiate for the needs of the patients on the wards.
- Develop skills to promote palliative care in a variety of care settings.

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Scholar

Physicians demonstrate a lifelong commitment to reflective learning, as well as the creation, dissemination, application and translation of medical knowledge.

As Scholars, students will demonstrate a lifelong commitment to learning:

- Demonstrate skills relevant to researching and critically appraising the literature in palliative medicine.
- Demonstrate skills relevant to researching and critically appraising the literature in other specialties relevant to palliative care (medical oncology, radiation oncology, cardiology, respirology, neurology, etc.).
- Demonstrates an ability to use evidence-based medicine (including emerging practices) to aid in the management of specific patient symptom complexes.

Professional

As Professionals, physicians are committed to the health and well-being of individuals and society through ethical practice, profession-led regulation, and high personal standards of behaviour.

As Professionals, students are committed to health and well-being of individuals through ethical practice, profession-led regulation and high personal standards of behavior:

- Demonstrate a commitment to their patients through ethical practice.
- Demonstrate an appropriate work ethic and professional behavior towards each member in the palliative care team.
- Demonstrate ethical practice in a consultative setting, including, but not limited to, considerations around truth telling, consent and capacity, withdrawal or withholding therapy, palliative sedation and euthanasia.
- Demonstrate an awareness of one's own health and the health of other members of health care teams, as they tend to palliative care patients and develop supportive strategies to improve self-care and the care of other team members.

INFORMATION

Recommended Reading

Alberta Resource Guide; Pallium Palliative Pocketbook; Oxford Textbook of Palliative Medicine

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Teaching Unit

Riverview Health Centre 3East (204-478-6136)

St.Boniface Hospital 8A (204-237-2341)

Health Sciences Centre Consultation Service (HSC Paging 204-787-2071)

Evaluations

Evaluations will be provided by the supervising physicians.

First Day Instructions

The student will present to the designated ward on the first day. This information will be provided by the administrative assistant.

WARD ACTIVITIES

Service Duties

Monday-Friday 9am-5pm

Academic Schedule

Journal Club and teaching sessions every Thursday morning from 8:30-12:00 at Riverview Health Centre PEB338