

Reading and Web Based Education Resources

Reading

The importance of reading and studying in the clinical years is paramount. Students need to focus their reading in three areas:

1. Students must read and study about their patients' problems they are seeing. The chief advantage of this method is that it gives the student a story and a face with which to associate the facts about a given condition. Most students find that they retain more of their reading when they can employ a framework of personal experience. Above all, this approach emphasizes that reading supplements clinical experience. Detailed reading about patients' problems can lead to better patient care. Comprehensive textbooks, specialty books, subspecialty books, medical journals and on-line references help students prepare for patient presentation on teaching rounds and conferences and enhance the student's knowledge base. Students are required to do computer searches in order to find the latest evidence to support a diagnosis or a treatment. Such searches provide excellent sources for obtaining leads to appropriate current references. It is rather easy to get lost in these copious indices unless one knows exactly what to look for. Thus, it becomes critical to precisely define the questions regarding each patient and then find the answers to these questions in the medical literature. Students who read about their patients become more involved in-patient care and develop problem-solving skills and clinical judgement. These are skills needed for the NBME exam and patient care.
2. Students are recommended to read a concise textbook from "cover-to-cover" to learn the extent and breadth of the clerkship specialty. This is particularly important since students will not see all of the important and major disorders of any specialty within a six or 12-week rotation. If reading selections are solely determined by their patients' problems, students are limited by the number and variety of their cases. Understanding of each specialty must go beyond the patient experience on the wards and in the clinics. Reading a concise textbook also helps to assure a uniform background in medical studies at different affiliated hospitals.
3. Students must read to prepare for the end-of-clerkship NBME examinations, which primarily assess medical knowledge. The faculty have significantly weighted these examinations to be incorporated into the final clerkship grade to emphasize the importance of medical knowledge and test-taking skills during the clerkships. Furthermore, the mean across the 6 NBME examinations also correlates with USMLE Step 2 performance, which is important for obtaining a US residency. To do well on the NBME clinical subject exams and Step 2 CK requires a prodigious amount of reading, studying and practicing questions. To assist with third year demands to do well on written examinations, SGU provides two web-based resources, UWorld and Firecracker, to improve test-taking ability and medical knowledge.

The Office of the Dean monitors students' performance on these programs to provide feedback to the clerkship directors and to assess students' professional behavior. A key component of professional behavior is the commitment to complete assignments and to strive for excellence in medical knowledge.