Laboratory Management and Informatics Course (updated April 2016)

Most pathologists will be called on to manage important clinical resources. The increasing complexity and competitiveness of the healthcare environment demands effective management by all those responsible for deploying resources. There is a broad consensus that training in management skills and informatics should be a part of the training of pathologists. Similarly because of demands for increasingly effective communication of pathology’s primary product, information, pathologists must possess communication skills and be familiar with modern means for collecting, storing, and disseminating clinical information in support of patient care and education of professional colleagues.

Principles of management and informatics are challenging to convey to residents and fellows who are dealing with the urgency and workload related to patient care. In addition, because of a lack of prior exposure, many residents find it difficult to put the principles covered into a structured whole that can be remembered and applied. Therefore, in the rotation emphasis is placed on bringing in academic faculty as models of pathologists actively involved in management and informatics issues.

Coordinating Teaching Faculty Member:
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This rotation is sponsored by the pathology residency program at the University of Minnesota Medical School. Laël Gatewood, PhD (lael@umn.edu) coordinates the informatics content.

Teaching Faculty Members:
This rotation draws from the ranks of academic pathologists practicing in the Twin Cities and greater Minnesota. A listing of recent faculty is maintained at the departmental web site (http://www.pathology.umn.edu).

Training Site:
University of Minnesota, East Bank Campus

Duration of Rotation:
The course is offered annually in May with one to two-hour sessions each day.

Post Graduate Level of Residents Involved:
PGY 4-5

Overview of Daily Duties and Responsibilities:
Residents attend two hour-long sessions daily that are focused on a single management or informatics theme. Residents are expected to read the supplemental materials and articles provided. Residents and fellow are also responsible for monitoring the rotation's web page.
Management Goals and Objectives:

1. Appreciate that the role of management in a pathologist's professional work life is important and deserving of continuous involvement and learning.
2. Become familiar with key management knowledge that can facilitate and guide learning activities.
3. Know the basic skill sets associated with personal leadership and group leadership.
4. Understand one's own areas of strength and weakness in terms of leadership.
5. Cost out a procedure or test.
6. Be familiar with workload measurement and planning.
7. Develop a strategy for finding a job.
8. Use a web-based knowledge resource compendium for clinical and other professional work.
9. Understand the purpose of lab accreditation and become familiar with CAP criteria.

Informatics Goals and Objectives:

1. Achieve the ACGME informatics milestone Systems Based Practice 7: Explains, discusses, classifies and applies clinical informatics (AP/CP).
2. Become familiar with the electronic health record, the lab information management systems, and associated pathology information systems maintained by the health system.
3. Describe the complex relationship between data, information and knowledge.
4. Design a decision support system for clinicians accessing pathology data and reports.

Required Conference/Seminars:

Residents are expected to complete this rotation in order to graduate. Attendance at every session is expected because the rotation is spread over a single month.

Scholarly Activities and Research During and After Rotation:

Related papers recently published in peer-reviewed journals are noted on the rotation web site. A final assignment requires integration of information from pathology resources.

Method of Resident Evaluation:

Attendance at the daily meetings and participation in the discussions are the most important components of residents’ evaluation. Residents are also evaluated on their interpersonal skills, professional attitudes, reliability, and ethics with members of the teaching faculty, peers, and laboratory staff. They are further evaluated on their initiative in using the clinical literature as it relates to their final assignment.

Educational and Computer Resources Available: The campus's Biomedical and University Libraries house many relevant books and periodicals. They and the course's web site provide convenient access to textbooks, periodicals, and many related resources. Ready access to this information network is available from home.