

Short communication

Evaluation of a required teaching rotation for pharmacy residents at a school of pharmacy

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Abstract

Introduction: Didactic teaching experiences are frequently a component of post-graduate year one (PGY1) pharmacy residencies. However, limited published data focus on descriptions and evaluations of such teaching rotations.

Objective: This study aimed to describe and evaluate a teaching rotation for pharmacy residents at a school of pharmacy.

Methods: Pharmacy practice residents ($N = 22$) completed a teaching rotation at the University of Wisconsin–Madison School of Pharmacy. The rotation consisted of orientation prior to the start of the teaching rotation, a minimum of 60 teaching hours in the Pharmacotherapy Lab, and additional hours spent in teaching preparation and grading. Residents were invited to complete pre- and post-rotation surveys evaluating the rotation and attitudes regarding teaching. Un-paired data were analyzed.

Results: Response rates were 54% and 59% for the initial and final surveys, respectively. Respondent confidence in several teaching-related areas increased ($p < 0.05$ in all 17 categories), but it remained lower compared to current faculty ($p < 0.05$ in ten of 17 categories). Of the respondents, 69.2% indicated that their career goals changed to include more teaching opportunities as a result of the rotation.

Conclusion: A required teaching rotation was described and evaluated. Residents reported satisfaction with the rotation along with increased interest and confidence in teaching after completion of the rotation. Identified areas for improvement included scheduling methods, amount and consistency of feedback, and types of teaching experiences available.

Contribution to pharmacy education: This paper describes a resident teaching rotation that has been effectively incorporated into the Pharmacotherapy Lab within the Doctor of Pharmacy didactic curriculum.

Published by Elsevier Inc.

Keywords: Teaching; Academia; Residency

Introduction

Teaching pharmacy students in the classroom, as well as in the clinical practice setting, is a responsibility of many post-graduate year-one (PGY1) pharmacy residents. In addition, the American System of Health-System Pharmacists

(ASHP) has identified providing “medication and practice-related education/training” to others, including health care professionals, as an outcome objective for PGY1 residencies.¹ In recognition of this important aspect of residency training, formal teaching rotations and experiences are included as a required component of many PGY1 residencies. The importance of educating and recruiting entry-level faculty for schools of pharmacy has also been identified as a point of emphasis by the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (AACP), which further justifies the role of teaching rotations in residency programs.² Residencies

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provide an additional form of pharmacy education that is an important mechanism through which future clinical preceptors and faculty members are trained.

While the impact that Teaching Certificate Programs have on residency training and career paths has been documented, literature is lacking regarding resident perceptions of a required resident teaching rotation.^{3–5} Kirdahy et al.⁶ described an elective four-week teaching rotation for pharmacy residents at a community hospital in collaboration with the University of Florida College of Pharmacy. The described rotation provided residents with the opportunity for one-on-one review sessions with students, facilitation of small and large-group discussions, and grading. Benefits of the teaching rotation included the opportunity to provide residents other training experiences to reinforce clinical knowledge, creation of networking opportunities, exposure of pharmacy students to various pharmacy practice perspectives, and provision of teaching assistance to the school. Challenges identified by residents were related to scheduling and spending a full month away from their practice site.⁶

Evidence in the literature supports the idea that opportunities to teach during a residency correlates to future careers in academia. McNatty et al.⁷ conducted a survey of 450 former pharmacy residents and found that giving lectures ($p = 0.0074$), participating in problem-based learning or small-group seminars ($p = 0.0016$), or serving as primary preceptors ($p = 0.0003$) increased the likelihood of residents pursuing faculty positions. Therefore, it is worthwhile to discuss and evaluate resident perceptions of available residency teaching rotations.

Description of the teaching rotation

PGY1 residents from ambulatory care, community pharmacy, and acute care residency sites in Wisconsin have participated in a teaching rotation with the University of Wisconsin–Madison School of Pharmacy Pharmacotherapy Lab since 1998. The Pharmacotherapy Lab is a required component of each of the Pharmacotherapy courses taught during the fall and spring semesters of the second and third professional years. Pharmacotherapy Lab activities are designed to (1) facilitate discussion of various pharmacotherapy topics in a cooperative learning environment, (2) utilize case-based active-learning teaching approaches, and (3) support practice skills development through hands-on activities (e.g., patient consults, physical assessment and monitoring techniques, formal medication reviews, and medical device use). The Pharmacotherapy Lab is a team-taught course; teams consist of School of Pharmacy faculty, residents from different sites, fourth-year pharmacy clerkship students, and occasionally third-year pharmacy students who are enrolled in a teaching elective course.

As part of the teaching rotation, residents who undergo preceptor training are classified by the School as Clinical

Instructors and are provided access to online course materials. As a Clinical Instructor, residents have access to School of Pharmacy resources, are issued a University identification card for access to the School of Pharmacy building, receive a University e-mail address, and are added to the University directory, making them accessible to students. A four-hour teaching rotation orientation is provided prior to the start of the fall semester and all residents who will teach in the Pharmacotherapy Lab are expected to attend. During this orientation, facilitation of a “large-group” discussion is demonstrated and tips on leading Pharmacotherapy Lab discussions are provided. Residents also rotate through different “small-group” discussions to learn about online course resources, providing verbal feedback to students, and grading student SOAP notes using a rubric.

For assigned Pharmacotherapy Lab sessions, residents are responsible for leading “large-group” (25–30 students) and “small-group” (five to six students) patient case discussions. Residents also provide feedback to students through written and oral evaluations, grade Pharmacotherapy Lab assignments, and work with students on an individual basis during hands-on activities and practice simulations. Residents are expected to complete one teaching-related project that is typically associated with their assigned Pharmacotherapy Lab sessions. Example projects include creation of new patient cases or revision of current ones, creation of recorded tutorials on various pharmacy practice topics for students to access online, and development of grading rubrics for Pharmacotherapy Lab assignments or activities. The School of Pharmacy has formal agreements with each of the residents’ programs detailing the duration of their respective teaching rotation. Therefore, a resident may be assigned to assist in the instruction of four to eight Pharmacotherapy Lab sessions over the course of the academic year. Teaching sessions are assigned based on individual resident availability and the type of residency (e.g., residents in PGY1 programs at sites with multiple ambulatory care experiences are typically assigned to sessions that focus on chronic disease state management). Each session is taught Monday through Friday in five consecutive two- to three-hour periods. Presenting didactic lectures in the Pharmacotherapy course is not a component of this teaching rotation.

In addition to orientation, several resources are provided to residents to assist them throughout the teaching rotation. Each resident is assigned a teaching preceptor for the academic year. Pharmacotherapy Lab preparation sessions are held one week prior to the start of the associated session to allow the teaching team to meet, review the content and teaching plan with the lecturing faculty, and discuss expectations for the upcoming week. An optional Teaching Certificate Program is also offered through the University of Wisconsin–Madison School of Pharmacy for residents, although it is not directly associated with the teaching rotation.⁸

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