

The Effective Neurology Clerkship

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MEDICINE *of* THE HIGHEST ORDER



Key Components of a Neurology Clerkship

- General principles
- Clerkship goals
- Clerkship structure
- Faculty and residents
- Conferences
- Syllabus
- Feedback and evaluation

General Principles of Organizing a Clerkship

"Clerkship students are like orphans: they don't want to be in the way; and they want to be useful."

- Active, hands-on experience
- Patient-centered learning
- Avoid a "parallel curriculum"

Clerkship Goals

1. Neurologic history and examination
2. Indications for imaging studies and laboratory tests
3. Common neurological problems seen in primary care
 - Outpatient: headache, dizziness, back and neck pain
 - Inpatient: seizures, stroke, mental status changes
4. Bread-and-butter neurology referred to neurologists
5. Psychosocial skills

Clerkship Structure

- ORGANIZATION!!!!
- Student curriculum = resident curriculum
- Avoid pulling students off the wards for a parallel curriculum
- Set resident and faculty schedules to mirror student schedules
- Assign 1-2 students to a resident team for at least 2 weeks

Faculty and Residents

- Key to a successful clerkship
- Set teaching expectations
- Faculty and resident development activities
- Happy faculty and residents = Happy clerkship students

Clerkship Conferences

- Limit to 1-2 unique student conferences per week
- Patient oriented and case based
- Resident conference series
- Providing lunch improves attendance

Advantages of Bedside Presentations

- The patient is the center of the discussion, not the disease
- The formality improves the quality of the presentation
- The patient can correct any misinformation
- The patient can be observed for examination abnormalities
- The patient appreciates the attention

Syllabus

- Neuroanatomy review
- Neurologic history and exam
- Neurologic tests
- Common neurological problems seen in primary care
- Bread-and-butter neurologic disorders referred to neurologists
- Child neurology

Feedback and Evaluation

- Evaluations must be timely and frequent
- Evaluations must be both objective and subjective
- Evaluations must be fair
- Norm-based vs. criterion-based grading
- “Feedback Fridays”

“It is wrong to be preoccupied with objectivity in all of our evaluation instruments.”

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