

CURRICULUM: OCCUPATIONAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL DISEASE PROCESS

I. GOALS

To provide residents in Internal Medicine the opportunities to gain the knowledge, skills and attitudes regarding occupational and environmental medicine required to practice good general internal medicine including how to assist in the long-term management of work-related illness and disability.

Learn the basics of occupational medicine: how to do a good history; what are the common problems, how does one evaluate and plan an approach.

Learn about special considerations of the occupational medicine doctor: whom do they work for; how does this change, if at all, issues of confidentiality and other ethical considerations.

Describe the physician's role in disability programs, including Worker's Compensation and Social Security Disability.

II. CONTENT

- A. Appreciation of the reciprocal relationships between work, the environment and health.
- B. Occupational exposures to potentially health-affecting work related activities and chemicals.
- C. Good occupational/environmental history; skills in interpreting the occupational/environmental health history.
- D. Approach to and ability to work-up patients with suspected occupational/environmental diseases; information resources available to the physician for further assessment or work or environmentally related health risks.
- E. When and how to seek consultation from an occupational medicine specialist.
- F. Role of the physician (both an ethical and an effective agent for health) regarding communications with patients, employers, compensation systems and regulatory agencies
- G. Familiarity with common problems in occupational and environmental medicine.

III. TEACHING METHOD

- A. Elective rotation: Occupational Medicine
- B. During elective month on same basis as any other elective (This would include work at St. Vincent's as well as on site in industry and at other offices than at St. Vincent's). This can be a full or half month rotation.
- C. Conferences: Grand Rounds, departmental and Noon conferences.

Suggested topics

- Approach to suspected occupational and/or environmental diseases (how to do a screening and an in depth history and decide whether the presenting complaints are likely to be related to an environmental cause)
 - Disease prevention from an Occupational/environmental perspective
 - Assessing impairment and disability from a work-related cause
 - Assessing a patient's ability to return to their previous job or any type of job
 - Ethical, legal and regulatory concerns in doing occupational/environmental medicine
 - Approach to common problems such as low back pain, trauma, pulmonary diseases, skin diseases
- D. Reading: Beeson (pgs. 2331-2369), Harrison, Barker and/or Goroll (occupational/environmental disease sections); see attached bibliography

- E. How: Seeing patients with primary care internists, subspecialists and occupational medicine physicians, reviewing the cases, assigned reading; site visits to industry.

Type of patients: Pre-employment evaluation, return to work from non-work-related illness; return to work from work-related problem; treatment and follow up of work related conditions.

IV. EVALUATION

Considered at the annual review and evaluation of the residency with the residents and faculty

Discussed by the General Curriculum Committee annually

Evaluation Method: Usual residency evaluation form for electives

Occupational Medicine Conference Topics

1. Approach to suspected occupational and/or environmental diseases (how to do a screening and an in depth history and decide whether the presenting complaints are likely to be related to an environmental cause)
2. Disease prevention from an Occupational/environmental perspective
3. Assessing impairment and disability from a work-related cause
4. Assessing a patient's ability to return to their previous job or any type of job
5. Ethical, legal and regulatory concerns in doing occupational/environmental medicine
6. Approach to common problems such as low back pain, trauma, pulmonary diseases, skin diseases

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