



Attending an Alcoholics Anonymous Meeting as Part of the Family Medicine Clerkship

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Learning Objectives

At the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Describe the community resources assignment for the Family Medicine Clerkship, including the required attendance at a 12-step Alcoholics Anonymous meeting and the tools used to evaluate student reflections.
- Articulate how attending an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting fulfills STFM National Clerkship Curriculum objectives.
- Describe, using our pre-/post-assignment surveys, how attending an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting may impact medical students' attitudes towards addiction.

Why Alcoholics Anonymous

- Easily implemented.
- Does not require faculty or didactic course time.
- Firsthand, experiential learning activity.
- Addresses multiple STFM National Clerkship Curriculum objectives.

National Clerkship Curriculum

- Identify resources in a local practice community that support positive health outcomes for diverse patients and families.
- Promote the use of support groups and other community resources to assist patients with mental health needs.
- Identify and distribute current resources for patients with substance abuse problems at their clinic sites (e.g., lists of treatment referral centers, self-help groups, substance abuse counselors, etc.).
- Core chronic conditions: substance use and abuse

Background Literature

- Limited research on medical students attending an AA meeting on their Family Medicine Clerkship
- Most literature focuses on AA during the Psychiatric Clerkship.

Literature

- Evaluation of medical student attitudes toward alcoholics anonymous.
 - TAKE HOME: Medical students rate the biological approach of treatment of addiction as most important. It is essential to incorporate more education on the spiritual dimensions of recovery in the treatment of addiction.
- A Qualitative Analysis of Medical Students' Reflection on Attending an Alcoholics Anonymous Meeting: Insights for Future Addiction Curricula.
 - TAKE HOME: Students have limited exposure to addiction treatment. Medical students found attending an AA meeting to be a valuable experience and may increase their level of comfort when treating patients.

Literature

- Use of Alcoholics Anonymous as Part of Medical School Education: Students' and Educators' Perspectives.
 - TAKE HOME: AA is a way to expose medical students to people with alcohol dependency and may positively impact perceptions.
- Physicians-in training attitudes towards caring for and working with patients with alcohol and drug abuse diagnoses.
 - TAKE HOME: Effective education strategies during training may reverse negative perceptions of patients with substance abuse.

The Assignment

- Introduced during Family Medicine Clerkship orientation
- Required to attend one open Alcoholics Anonymous meeting
- An attendance form must be signed by the meeting chairperson
- Students answer several questions about the experience

Community Resource Form

Appendix 3. Community Resources Completion Forms

I, (name of group leader/teacher of class-first name only for 12 step meetings) _____

Sign that the student named below attended the full meeting/class and participated appropriately.

The FIU Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine thanks you for your help in educating our students.

By signing, I, (name of student) _____ state that I was in attendance for
the entire duration of the following community resource: _____ Date, day of week,

time: _____ Location: _____ Student Signature: _____

I liked _____

I did not like _____

I learned _____

Would you recommend this particular site to other students? Why or why not? _____

Community resources relate to which FM principles (circle)? biopsychosocial life cycle perspective,
prevention, education, communication, continuity of care, coordination of care, comprehensiveness,
patient advocacy, patient empowerment

I, (name of group leader/teacher of class-first name only for 12 step meetings) _____

Sign that the student named below attended the full meeting/class and participated appropriately.

The FIU Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine thanks you for your help in educating our students.



What Our Students Think

- Pre-/post-survey administered to 57 students of the class of 2020
 - 68% response rate
 - Pre-survey given during clerkship orientation
 - Post-survey given electronically when assignment is due
- IRB exemption obtained

What Our Students Think

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) Pre Survey	Strongly Disagree / Disagree (%)		Neutral (%)		Strongly Agree / Agree (%)	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
AA meetings are a useful resource	0	2	12	0	88	98
If I see a patient with alcohol addiction, I am likely to refer them to AA	0	3	19	5	82	92
I am confident in my ability to explain AA to my patients.	17	2	44	0	39	79
I am knowledgeable of community resources for patients with alcohol addiction	41	6	32	7	27	88
I feel confident in my abilities to assess a patient for alcohol addiction	7	2	49	5	44	93

What Our Students Think

- Going to AA, I learned that:
 - “There are several steps to the meetings. Everyone has failed at something and it’s what brings everyone together. Chips mean a lot.”
 - “People find success via support/ forming a community. Everyone has a different story. Cannot judge patients for their actions. There is hope for people who are alcoholics.”
 - “Strength in empathy. Group consciousness is a helpful therapy technique. Everyone gets a sponsor for accountability.”

What our students think...

- Going to AA, I learned that:
 - "...the members derived power from the idea of anonymity and having themselves be a part of AA without giving AA a public face... There was a lot of discussion on the power of anonymity...and how it relates to their ability to change themselves without having to lie about who they are."
 - "I learned the general process and more about the 12 steps. It was interesting to see everyone sharing their story and how the construct of the 12 steps fits into their lives..."
 - "Many create long lasting friendships and social networks through AA and view their fellow members as family."

Take Home Points

- Requiring students to attend an AA meeting requires few resources and helps to address multiple STFM National Clerkship Curriculum objectives
- After attending the AA meeting, students felt confident in their abilities to assess patients for alcohol addiction and to refer them to appropriate community resources.

References

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