



H40 The Implementation of a Forensic Pathology Rotation for Medical Students

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Learning Overview: After attending this presentation, attendees will be exposed to the inception, implementation, execution, and management of the El Paso County Office of the Medical Examiner (EPOME) elective forensic pathology rotation for medical students from the Texas Tech Paul L. Foster School of Medicine (PLFSOM). This experience provides an early introduction to forensic pathology to medical students through an educational curriculum that has performance objectives carefully aligned with the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) core competencies for Graduate Medical Education (GME).

Impact on the Forensic Science Community: The forensic science community will be impacted by this presentation in that it provides an effective blueprint to managing, implementing, and evaluating the project of a student rotation in a forensic field. Promoting early visibility of forensic sciences through high-quality, meaningful exposure has been mentioned as one of the key strategies that can contribute to individuals choosing forensic specialization fields. The rotation outlined in this presentation has accomplished that by: (1) allowing students to acquire basic knowledge of forensic pathology; (2) teaching students advanced forensic autopsy techniques; (3) allowing students to become familiar with the daily duties of a forensic pathologist, such as daily interactions (with family, attorneys, other medical professionals), courtroom testimony, administrative issues; (4) providing students with literature and resources to broaden their fund of knowledge; (5) mentoring students on academic projects; and (6) supporting the students' applications to pathology residency positions.

Prior to this rotation, the autopsy pathology exposure the medical students from the PLFSOM experienced was limited to a 4-week Laboratory Medicine rotation, which included time spent in both the anatomic and clinical pathology labs with limited, if any, hospital autopsy exposure. Following implementation of an elective forensic pathology rotation, the students have had the opportunity to view daily autopsy cases in a medical examiner setting, participate in morning conferences where cases are presented, attend lectures provided by the faculty, join slide review sessions, and have graduated responsibilities in the autopsy suite, up to taking ownership of forensic autopsy cases, including formulating opinions on ancillary testing (histology, toxicology) and learning how to produce formal, written autopsy reports.

This presentation is intended to outline key project management steps, including: defining the project, setting goals and milestones, putting together a team, monitoring tasks, keeping stakeholders informed and increasing their buy-in, and bringing the project to completion. Also described are monitoring strategies to ensure continued quality improvement as well as ongoing strategies to optimize the didactic value of the student experience (e.g., student customization of the rotation, bidirectional feedback, and aligning the academic sessions with the students' ongoing curriculum).

Medical Education, Student Rotation, Forensic Pathology