

Inspired

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Taking Grand Rounds to a New Level




“The goal of the grand rounds lectures is to find a balance of material that is clinically useful but at the same time able to challenge faculty to develop new ideas and stay at the forefront of medical knowledge.”

THE FACULTY EVALUATIONS SAY IT ALL. After an engaging grand rounds lecture entitled “Bone Loss in Adolescents with Eating Disorders,” given recently at Montefiore’s Cherkasky Auditorium, physicians in the audience shared what they’d taken away. One physician said that, after hearing the lecture, they would be sure “not to wait as long to address missed periods in a girl who has been menstruating for two or three years.” Another reported that, going forward, they would prioritize assessing her patients’ calcium and vitamin D levels.

It’s exactly these kinds of responses that illustrate the fundamental mission of grand rounds, says Suzette Oyeku, MD, MPH, FAAP, Co-Director, Pediatric Grand Rounds, The Children’s Hospital at Montefiore (CHAM), and Assistant Professor, Pediatrics, Albert Einstein College of Medicine. “Grand rounds are an important component of ongoing medical education that allow us, as physicians, to take what we learn during the lectures and integrate this information into our clinical practice,” she adds.

Grand rounds have a storied tradition in medicine, dating back more than a century, when a patient would be wheeled into an auditorium and seasoned doctors would lead trainees on an exploration of the case at hand.

Their main purpose has always been to provide ongoing medical education to trained physicians, but they have morphed considerably over the years from single case studies to large lectures on cutting-edge



research. At Montefiore, they have evolved to include speakers from outside medical institutions as well as those outside the field of medicine itself. The efforts to expand the range of speakers and topics have been a success: Last year, Montefiore's grand rounds series provided over 1,500 hours of instruction and were attended by some 86,000 physicians.

"Grand rounds in internal medicine date from the 19th century and the days of Sir William Osler," says Victor L. Schuster, Ted and Florence Baumritter Chair of the Department of Medicine, Montefiore and Einstein, "at which point it was an exercise that began with a patient interview and progressed to a discussion of that case. It has evolved over the years into a weekly hour-long conference about a given medical topic in internal medicine. Over the course of an academic year, essentially the panoply of internal medicine will be covered. Therefore, if an internist religiously attends all grand rounds talks, he or she gains a thorough update in the specialty, including CME credit. We also record the talks and post them online as a webcasts so that our physicians can stay up to date and get CME credit if they cannot attend the talk in person."

The goal of the grand rounds lectures is to find a balance of material that is clinically useful but at the same time able to challenge faculty to develop new ideas and stay at the forefront of medical knowledge, says Mario J. Garcia, Chief, Cardiology, Montefiore; Co-Director, Montefiore Einstein Center for Heart and Vascular Care; and Pauline Levitt Chair in Medicine and Professor, Medicine and Radiology, Einstein. "We try to provide lectures that are light in research and heavy in clinical experience during the summer for our new trainees. The rest of the year, it's the other way around."

To accommodate staff at Montefiore's multiple campuses, the cardiology department rotates its lectures, presenting at a different campus each month, and time-pressed faculty can attend via videoconferencing. But technology can't fully substitute for in-person attendance, Dr. Garcia says, adding, "The social interaction between speaker and audience and the face-to-face afterward is so important. It's convenient for people to access the lectures remotely, but they tend to multitask and check email while they are watching, so they absorb less of the information."

Dr. Oyeku stresses the importance of the lectures' community-building aspect. "Grand rounds are a great opportunity for the pediatric community at Montefiore to come together, and we really try to leverage that, especially given the advent of web conferencing technology," she says. "You see faculty that you may not see in your day-to-day practice, including the doctors you refer patients to. It's good to put the face with the name."

Sophisticated technology is also responsible for making the grand rounds in his department—called the Masters of Surgery lecture series—more innovative and interesting, says Robert E. Michler, MD, Surgeon-

in-Chief, Professor and Chairman, Department of Surgery, Professor and Chairman, Department of Cardiovascular & Thoracic Surgery, Montefiore and Einstein. "We can present real-time viewing of operations," Dr. Michler says. "As well as emerging radiographic and angiographic technologies, which has made for more robust lectures."

To maintain a high level of interest among faculty—who often need to put aside their own clinical time to attend lectures and who live in a world where so much medical information is a mouse-click away—department heads strive to keep lecture topics varied and compelling. Montefiore researchers still make up the bulk of speakers in some departments, while others are focusing on upping their roster of outside lecturers. "In the past five years, we've brought in more national leaders in child and adolescent health and policy, which has dovetailed nicely with the incredible work being done at CHAM," says Dr. Oyeku. Recent speakers include Ruchi S. Gupta, MD, MPH, from the Program in Maternal and Child Health at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, who spoke on "Childhood Food Allergies: The Prevalence, Distribution and Clinical Diagnosis," and Peter G. Szilagyi, MD, MPH, from the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry, who spoke on "Moving from Discovery to Improved Health: How We Can Better Use Research to Improve Child Health."

Dr. Michler has expanded the concept of grand rounds lectures even further to include speakers and topics that are outside the field of medicine entirely. "We've had Olympic and World Cup sailors talk to us about maintaining and sustaining excellence at the world-class level, and educators speak about the differences in educating the greatest generation versus the baby boomers versus gen X versus gen next," Dr. Michler says. "It's all about expanding the minds of our physicians and enhancing the learning environment." ■

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