

Award lets students, patients experience the power of pointed questions

Medical care would be remarkably straightforward if all patients followed physicians' recommendations to the letter, but human nature makes this prospect little more than a daydream. In reality, patients often struggle to recognize their problems, accept help, and commit to follow through with treatment. Fortunately, physicians can learn effective ways to help patients meet these challenges, and a new award-winning program developed by faculty in the Department of Psychiatry is designed to help them do so.

"Smoking Cessation Groups Led by Medical Students in Inpatient and Outpatient Settings," a program developed by Brenda Roman, M.D., professor of psychiatry, director of

medical student education, and medical director of the psychotherapy clinic; Ann Morrison, M.D., associate professor of psychiatry and director of the Division of Community Psychiatry; and former faculty member Marie Rueve, M.D., won a prestigious American Psychiatric Association Innovative Teaching Award for 2008.

The award, one of just five given throughout North America, recognizes the program's value and impact on medical student education, innovation and uniqueness, and achievable and measurable results, among other qualities. Other award recipients include the Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons and the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine.

The program, which will be conducted by Morrison, Roman, and Nicole Borges,

Ph.D., director of medical education research for the Office of Academic Affairs, will provide basic training in motivational interviewing for all third-year medical students in the psychiatry clerkship. Students will then apply the training by leading smoking cessation groups at the Samaritan Homeless Clinic or more informally through their interactions with patients in other settings. Questionnaires will gauge students' confidence levels with the techniques before and after the program.

"Our goal is not to create experts in motivational interviewing," Roman said, "but to have students feel a certain comfort level with some of the basic techniques... that they can use in almost all patient encounters... (and) that can be of value in strengthening the doctor-patient relationship."

A passion for research

Finding great research opportunities takes... research.

Third-year student Jessica Hoying, who holds an M.S. degree in anatomy from Wright State, honed her appetite for research through her thesis work on keloid fibroblasts. As a medical student, she wanted to continue doing research and suspected she might not be the only one.

After surveying the class of 2010, Hoying was pleased to discover that 30 percent of her fellow students had research experience, and most wanted to continue doing research during medical school. Inspired by this widespread interest, she

founded the Medical Research Club to identify research opportunities and help connect students with faculty mentors.

"I find research to be a vital part of medicine," Hoying said. "It shapes the way we practice and allows us to better serve our patients."

Hoying worked with Mark Willis, M.A., research coordinator for the Office of Research Affairs, to create an online form students can complete to indicate their research experience and interests. They also created a list of faculty members and their research concentrations, along with student research opportunities and club news.

All of this information, Hoying hopes, will allow interested students to devote their time and energy to research rather than searching for projects.

Several department chairs and program directors have delivered presentations on their current research at club meetings. The meetings also give students an opportunity to discuss their experiences and share advice on posters, conferences, and even data interpretation.

As the club enters its second year, Hoying has enlisted a leadership team including representatives from each class, as well as several postgraduate members. Potential student researchers can learn more at www.med.wright.edu/ra/student/.