Unique Use of Case Studies in Nurse Practitioner Education

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The Problem

• Disconnect between students’ learning in didactic settings and application in clinical settings
  – Disorganization in assessing patients’ history and physical data
  – Inability to provide pertinent preceptor report
  – Desire to order excessive diagnostic studies
  – Lack of confidence in developing differential diagnoses and final diagnosis
  – Inexperience in providing patient education

The Solution

• In-class incorporation of:
  – Unfolding case studies
  – Case study scenarios
Unfolding Case Studies

• Presentation of patient and chief complaint
• Discussion of differential diagnoses based on chief complaint
• Revelation of patient’s history as class members ask for HPI, PFSH, and ROS
• Discussion of updated differential diagnoses based on patient history

Unfolding Case Studies

• Revelation of patient’s physical examination as class members “perform” exam
• Discussion of appropriate tests and/or imaging studies
• Development of appropriate diagnosis
• Discussion of treatment plan and patient education

Case Study Scenarios

• Rationale for use:
  – Need to assure active student participation
• Scenarios
  – Each student, during the semester, takes the role of patient
  – Each student, during the semester, takes the role of FNP
Case Study Scenarios

- Students randomly assigned a “disease” and date for scenario
- “FNP” is chosen randomly the day of the scenario

Case Study Scenarios

- Prior to scenario, “patient” develops case study including subjective and objective data for assigned disease
- “FNP” conducts the patient encounter eliciting patient history and physical examination
- “Patient” reveals case study elements in answering history and physical examination questions

Case Study Scenarios

- “FNP” gives report to preceptor, including differential diagnoses
Case Study Scenarios

• “FNP” orders tests and evaluates results, makes appropriate diagnosis, and provides treatment plan and patient education
• The “patient” becomes the disease expert, providing additional information

Case Study Scenarios

• Other students observe patient encounter, make suggestions at end of scenario, write an appropriate SOAP note, and evaluate performances by FNP and patient

Student Outcomes

• Level of expertise in their disease process
• Comfort in FNP role
• Confidence in asking history questions
• Appropriate physical exam routine
• Succinct preceptor report
• Rationale for differential diagnosis
Student Outcomes

- Reasoning for diagnostic studies
- Interpretation of diagnostic studies
- Justification of diagnosis
- Development of treatment plan and patient education
- Experience writing SOAP notes