

Class of 2011 Bioethics Honors Capstone Projects (* *with distinction*)

Christopher Acker

Title: Emergency Medical Treatment and the Right to Healthcare

Presenters: Christopher Acker

Description: I examine the topic of healthcare as a right from a Rawlsian viewpoint. I use emergency medical treatment as an example to demonstrate how an individual behind the "veil of ignorance" would choose to view access to healthcare as a right, and explore how in the United States we have already done so.

Anna Acosta

Title: Cultural Awareness in Undergraduate Medical Education: A Concern for Medical Ethics?

Presenters: Anna Acosta, Amber Anderson and Bethany Cohen

Description: To address the challenges faced as medical professionals confronting the issues of culture, this project was designed to begin development of a cultural awareness curriculum at the Stritch School of Medicine. Initial research focused on the importance of cultural training in undergraduate medical education and comparison of SSOM's cultural training requirements and resources to other undergraduate medical schools. As a pilot program, SSOM's first Cultural Awareness Symposium was developed for students to learn about the concept of cultural awareness, its importance and application in medicine, and to allow reflection on personal experiences in culture.

Amber Anderson

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Carolyn Auffenberg (Kron)*

Title: Diagnosis and Management of Gastrointestinal Helminthic infections: A Guide for International Service Immersion Trips

Presenters: Carolyn Kron and Kelly Dorsey

Description: My project was founded on an observation I had when on my International Service Immersion trip: Keeping in mind the economic, educational, and epidemiological realities of international underserved medicine, what is the best approach to diagnosing and managing helminthic infection? In my research, I uncovered several of the core ethical issues surrounding internationally underserved populations as well as several promising opportunities for addressing the core etiologies of these tropical diseases. I concluded that an effective approach to this question involves using an identification tool (for example, the 'field guide' that I created) for diagnosis and treatment guidelines, while at the same time acknowledging the potential of any sub-optimal treatment to contribute to disease resistance. Most importantly, by providing patient education of the risk factors for infection and transmission, the potential of drug resistance, and the life-long impact of helminthic infections, the service trips can have a sustainable impact on disease prevention.

Shams Bakhos

Title: Hospice and the Physician

Presenters: Sham Bakhos, Laura Kupper

Description: "Hospice and the Physician" was a year-long bioethics endeavor to contextualize the modern dying experience within discussions of a "medical gaze" and scientific authority. Our primary methodology consisted of personal interviews for which we corresponded with physicians, nurses, and social workers who are affiliated with hospice. We ultimately tried to answer the question, "Can the act of dying be made both human and humane in a world where biomedical techniques have legitimized the prolongation of dying?" We concluded that hospice directly challenges bureaucratic healthcare in which cure equals success, and challenges medical personal to think beyond the effort to cure. As future physicians, we took a special interest in the palliative care aspect of hospice in an effort to build a medical foundation of our own that centers upon maximizing patient comfort and relieving patient anxiety so that personal reflection, familial interaction, and accomplishment of goals prior to death can be more readily attained by our patients.

Gregory Brown

Title: Prescribing Practices of Generic versus Trade-name HMG-CoA Reductase Inhibitors for Self-pay Patients

Presenter: Gregory Brown

Description: In an attempt to qualify physicians' implicit awareness of drug costs in practice, the study examined prescription rates of generic and trade-name statins for all adult patients admitted to Loyola University Medical Center over a six-month period with a discharge diagnosis among the disorders of lipid metabolism. No significant difference was found in the rate of generic or trade-name prescriptions between patients with insurance versus patients without coverage. The cost difference between generic and trade-name drugs can be significant, especially when considering the chronicity of therapy, as is often the case with statins. In accordance with previous studies looking at physicians' awareness of drug costs, the data suggest that physicians may not take into consideration a patient's insurance status when prescribing medications, at least in an inpatient setting.

Poornima Chennamaneni

Title: Stethoscope Sterilization Amongst Loyola Residents

Presenters: Tyler A. Clark, Lisa M. DeGregoris, Purnima Chennamaneni

Description: The goal of the study set out to identify compliance with stethoscope sanitation methods among Loyola University Medicine and Medicine-Pediatrics residents. The data suggests that while the majority of residents agreed that the use of isopropyl alcohol pads were effective means of reducing bacterial load on stethoscopes, there were definite barriers to compliance with American Medical Association healthcare policy. Based on this study, the suggestion was made to strengthen house-staff education regarding the spread of nosocomial infections as well as increasing the availability and ease of accessibility of isopropyl alcohol pads or equally effective ethanol based hand cleaner in an attempt to improve nosocomial infection rates within the Loyola University Healthcare System

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Kelly Dorsey*

Title: Diagnosis and Management of Gastrointestinal Helminthic Infections: A Guide for International Service Immersion Trips

Presenters: Kelly Dorsey and Carolyn Kron

Description: Kelly Dorsey's bioethics capstone project was entitled "Diagnosis and Management of Gastrointestinal Helminthic Infections: A Guide for International Service Immersion Trips". She created a poster presentation highlighting the prevalence, differential diagnosis, ethical considerations, and management strategies of these infections in South America. Additionally, she created a field guide reference tool to aid future student immersion trip participants in better identifying and treating helminthic infections in the absence of technology.

Rebecca L. Gillani*

Title: A Review of the Management of Unruptured Intracranial Aneurysms at Loyola University Medical Center

Presenter: Rebecca L. Gillani

Description: My capstone project was a chart review study that sought to describe the management of unruptured intracranial aneurysms at Loyola University Medical Center, and determine which factors contribute to the management decision. We found younger patients and current smokers were more likely to undergo a procedure, either clipping or endovascular treatment. Patients with aneurysms from the cavernous carotid artery were unlikely to undergo a procedure, while patients with aneurysms from the vertebrobasilar system were more likely to undergo a procedure. In addition, patients with larger aneurysms were more likely to undergo a procedure. The most commonly cited reasons for management decision were risk of rupture, aneurysm size and patient wishes.

Dina Hafez

Title: Personal and Professional Perspectives on International Medical Service

Presenter: Dina Hafez, Beth Wittenberg

Description: The purpose of our study was to gain insight into the value that practicing physicians place on responding to international healthcare needs. We assessed physician interest and participation in international service throughout their training and careers, and we sought to understand the factors that prevent physicians from engaging in international service endeavors. Our secondary goal was to partner with interested study participants and Loyola's Center for Service and Global Health to establish additional international opportunities for Loyola medical students.

Eli Horn

Title: How Obesity Impacts the Physician-Patient Relationship

Presenter: Eli Horn

Description: A presentation outlining the beliefs, perceptions and treatment inequalities made on the part of physicians towards obese patients. Physician and patient surveys reveal a negative attitude bias and reluctance to pursue obesity treatment on the parts of physicians, and unequal rates in the screening of certain forms of cancer. Includes a discussion of contributing factors and recommendations.

Laura Kupper

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Stephen Lane

Title: Physician-Assisted Suicide: Ethical Implications and the Oregon Experience

Presenters: Stephen M. Lane

Description: An overview of the ethical arguments and position statements regarding physician-assisted suicide. A further reassessment of the aforementioned using the results published after 10 years of the implementation of the Oregon Death with Dignity Act.

Maxwell Leither

Title: Health Disparities in the Underserved: The role of insurance in diabetic management.

Presenters: Maxwell Leither, Nathan Ontrop, Elizabeth Slagle, and Andrew Schneider

Description: We reviewed the diabetic management and outcomes of 165 patients, half of who had insurance coverage versus the other half who received their care through the non-profit "Access to Care" program. The "Access to Care" program is for individuals who do not have employee-sponsored health insurance and also do not qualify for government health coverage. Our hypothesis was that those in the "Access to Care" program would have difficulty managing their diabetes due to the program having limited resources. However, we found that the patients in the "Access to Care" program had the same level of glucose control and slightly better LDL management than those covered with standard employee-sponsored health insurance. Thus, we concluded that the "Access to Care" model was an adequate model for providing health care coverage for patients with chronic conditions who do not have health insurance.

Tracy Lyons

Title: Improving Medical Students' Approach to Childhood Obesity

Presenters: Tracy Lyons

Description: After realizing how uncomfortable many medical students were with counseling families about childhood obesity, we wanted to create a tool that they could use to improve both their education and counseling skills. Through this project, we have created a pocketbook for medical students to utilize during their pediatric clerkship that presents a stepwise approach and advice to guide counseling.

Erin McNeely

Title: A Daily Plan Tool for Patient Care: Improving Care Team Communication

Presenter: Erin McNeely

Description: This project was an interdisciplinary team effort to improve medical staff to patient communication with the use of a simple, one-page, daily plan tool for in-hospital patients at Loyola and Gottlieb Hospitals. The pilot project was completed over a two month time period, which included a pre-survey of staff, two weeks of tool testing, and post surveys of staff and patients. The tool was found to improve patient understanding of the care plan and patient satisfaction with their care, and increased staff awareness of communication issues within their teams.

Emily Obringer

Title: Developing a Sustainable Relationship Between Stritch Students and H.O.T.S.T.U.F.F.

Presenters: Emily Obringer & Gitanjali Sivasubramaniam

Description: Helping Ourselves To Succeed Through Uniting Friends & Fun (H.O.T.S.T.U.F.F.) is an after-school program at Proviso Area for Exceptional Children (PAEC) school, which serves children with severe behavior, emotional, and/or mental disabilities. Our goal was to recruit Loyola Stritch School of Medicine students to serve as mentors and tutors for the program. As coordinators, we developed volunteer documents and facilitated the completion of

volunteer requirements for the Stritch students. In addition, we helped educate the volunteers through informational meetings about the unique behaviors of the children and the disciplinary techniques used at the school. We hoped that by creating this volunteer process the relationship between H.O.T.S.T.U.F.F. and Stritch students could continue to evolve and strengthen.

Nathan Ontrop

Title: Health Disparities in the Underserved: The role of insurance in diabetic management.

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Julia Peters

Title: Climate Change and the Disproportionate Impact on Women and Women's Health

Presenter: Julia Peters

Description: Climate change and environmental degradation disproportionately impact the poor, and the poor are disproportionately women and children. Women's health and livelihood depends greatly on the environment including women's roles as gatherers of fuel in areas with forest ecosystem damage, or gatherers of water in areas of drought. Future directions need to include women in the process of adaptation, mitigation, and implementation of technology and resources in solving the issues of climate change and the impact on health and wellbeing.

Leah Phillippi

Title: "Help, I'm Seizing!" Seizure Management Guideline Development and Implementation at LUMC

Presenters: Leah Phillippi and Cindy Schlessinger

Description: Our project involved creating and implementing a uniform seizure management guideline at LUMC. My role in this project has been primarily focused on raising awareness and implementing the guideline in various educational settings throughout Loyola. To date, the guideline has become integrated into the lecture series given during the 4th year Neurology clerkship and has been established as a topic for a nursing in-service day. By the end of 4th year, my goal is to list it among other established protocols and guidelines at LUMC, to present it as a Grand Rounds Topic, and to establish a learning e-module to help educate other health care employees.

Kathryn Redinger *

Title: Attitudes and Behaviors Regarding Inpatient Cervical Cancer Screening Among Internal Medicine Physicians

Presenter: Kathryn Redinger

Description: Many studies have reported socioeconomic disparities in cervical cancer incidence and mortality exist reflecting a larger issue of unequal access to health care. One proposed solution to confronting this health care disparity is to offer cervical cancer screening to women hospitalized for non-gynecological diagnoses. Pursuant to Illinois State Law, each female over

the age of 20 admitted to the hospital should be offered a pap testing unless contraindicated or it has been performed within the previous year.

This study was designed to examine the attitudes and behaviors regarding inpatient cervical cancer screening and the Illinois mandate among the Loyola administration and internal medicine residents. The study concluded that most internal medicine physicians were aware of the law, but that 82.8% did not feel that the inpatient setting was an appropriate one for cervical cancer screening, and 0% of respondents were performing inpatient cervical cancer screenings.

Michael Redinger *

Title: Why the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Should Have Supported the Inclusion of Illegal Immigrants in the Health Care Reform Process

Presenter: Michael Redinger

Description: During the recent health care reform debate, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops specifically argued for increased health care access for legal immigrants and pregnant women and children regardless of legal status as well as pushed for the ability of illegal immigrants to utilize the health care insurance purchasing exchanges that were created by the health care bill to purchase health insurance with their own money. However, my paper shows that the Bishop's advocacy on behalf of illegal immigrants failed to meet the principles of social justice using arguments derived from both secular and Catholic ethical principles. Instead, the USCCB should have been advocating for universal health care access for all illegal immigrants. This position would not only have placed the Bishops in the moral right but would have also been consistent with previous positions taken by the USCCB and recent papal encyclicals.

Brendan Ringhouse

Title: Obesity and Barrier to Care.

Presenters: Brendan Ringhouse and Kimberly Spahn

Description: It was about the lack of research and understanding of treating an obese population with acute illness and how there are emotional and physical barriers to this care. We specifically focused on the barriers seen within radiology and imaging an obese patient as well as addressed common myths in the subject.

Masey Ross

Title: Gender disparity in the diagnosis, treatment, and outcomes of ischemic heart disease

Presenter: Masey Ross

Description: I reviewed the literature for gender differences in the following areas: rate of diagnostic referral, chosen diagnostic modality, rate of pharmacologic and percutaneous intervention, and outcome, including hospital readmission and death. After discovering significant disparity between men and women, I proposed theories for this disparity, including biological differences, paucity of clinical trials, lack of physician awareness, and physician bias. I subsequently proposed several suggestions to minimize this disparity.

Angelina Shigeura

Title: Confronting Inequalities in Health Care Access: Pilsen Community Project

Presenter: Angelina Shigeura

Description: I implemented a community development project with the goal of addressing barriers to health care, focusing on the immigrant and uninsured population of the Pilsen neighborhood in Chicago. I achieved this goal by creating and distributing medical education and health care resource materials, initiating community outreach through health fairs and local schools, and connecting community members to local clinics and federally qualified health centers that offer services for the uninsured and undocumented regardless of their ability to pay.

This project allowed me the opportunity to really learn from community members and activists as well as solidify my own desire to work in underserved medicine.

Cindy Schlessinger

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Gitanjali Sivausbramaniam

Title: Developing a Sustainable Relationship Between Stritch Students and H.O.T.S.T.U.F.F.

Presenters: Emily Obringer & Gitanjali Sivasubramaniam

Description: The aim of our project was to develop a sustainable relationship between Loyola Stritch School of Medicine students and the after-school program called H.O.T.S.T.U.F.F. (Helping Ourselves to Succeed Through Uniting Friends and Fun). This program serves children with behavioral, emotional, and mental disabilities. In order to accomplish the goals of our project, we recruited Stritch volunteers for the after-school program, educated them through informational meetings and handouts, and helped the students fulfill the volunteer requirements. The medical students who volunteer act as tutors and role-models for the children in H.O.T.S.T.U.F.F., and this experience helps future physicians learn more about caring for children with special needs. In facilitating Loyola medical students volunteering at the after-school program, we hope to ensure the continued involvement of Stritch students in H.O.T.S.T.U.F.F.

Elizabeth Slagle

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Kimberly Spahn

Title: Obesity and Barrier to Care.

Presenters: Kimberly Spahn and Brendan Ringhouse

Description: We examined the physical and emotional barriers that obese patients face. We look at treating the obese patient in the acute setting and not at treating obesity. We focused on the particular barrier of Radiological imaging, especially using CT scanners and MRIs. We surveyed several hospitals in the area and found the weight limits as well as gantry diameter limits for the various machines. We also put to rest the insensitive and ignorant myth of sending obese patients who cannot fit in our machines to animal care facilities.

Julia Vetter

Title: A cross-sectional study examining the use of forest plots in systematic reviews.

Presenters/Researchers: Julia Vetter, Douglas Altman, David Moher, Thomas Heafner, David Schriger

Description: This project focused on identifying the current practices in reporting meta-analyses data in the forest plot format. It was found that the use of forest plots was often sub-optimal, including constructing plots when there was too little data to make them of use and failing to utilize the vertical dimension when ordering studies. These practices can potentially misconstrue the data presented in meta-analyses. Based on these findings, guidelines were suggested for improved construction of forest plots in order to promote clear, accurate and responsible data reporting.

Beth Wittenberg

Title: Personal and Physician Perspectives on International Medical Service

Presenters: Dina Hafez and Beth Wittenberg

Description: Beth completed a capstone project entitled "Personal and Physician Perspectives on International Medical Service" and presented her results at the Honors Program in Bioethics and Professionalism Symposium. Her project surveyed Loyola physicians to gain insight into the value that practicing physicians place on responding to international health needs, assessing physician interest and participation in international medical service throughout their training and careers. Furthermore, the project identified barriers that prevent physicians from engaging in international service endeavors. Beth continues to work with the Center for Service and Global Health at Loyola to identify new opportunities for students to work abroad and hopes to share her survey tool with other Jesuit medical institutions who are researching graduate participation in international medical service.