

Rationale for Introducing Resource Stewardship into Postgraduate Medical Education at the University of Toronto

Health care costs are rising at an unsustainable rate with up to 30% of healthcare spending unnecessary to improve quality of care. Physicians are responsible for approximately 80% of healthcare spending, yet there has traditionally been little discussion of value or appropriateness of care in medicine. On the heels of the successful launch of the American Board of Internal Medicine's Choosing Wisely campaign, the Canadian Medical Association is launching Choosing Wisely Canada in the Spring of 2014. This effort will intensify the focus on the inappropriate overuse of healthcare resources in Canada.

This has important implications for postgraduate training. Already, the current CanMEDS framework's Manager role has as a Key Competency for physicians to be able to "allocate finite healthcare resources appropriately" with enabling competencies of being able to "recognize the importance of just allocation of healthcare resources, balancing effectiveness, efficiency and access with optimal patient care" and to "apply evidence and management processes for cost-appropriate care". Resource stewardship is recognized to be an important concept for residents to learn, but is currently under-represented in the curriculum of most postgraduate training programs.

The CanMEDS framework is being updated for 2015 and there is currently active discussion regarding inclusion of additional competencies related to understanding resource stewardship and delivering high-value care. Specific competencies that relate to resource stewardship include (but are not limited to):

- Demonstrate just allocation of finite healthcare resources, balancing effectiveness, efficiency, access and system sustainability with optimal patient-centered care
- Apply available evidence or recommendations to provide appropriate, high-value care
- Employ strategies to overcome the personal, patient and organizational factors that influence clinical decision-making and promote inappropriate use of healthcare resources
- Use clinical judgment and demonstrate knowledge of pre-test probability when determining appropriate use of diagnostic tests and procedures
- Describe the ethical case for resource stewardship in health care
- Design and implement processes to improve standardization and reduce errors in delivering healthcare.

Physicians have a responsibility to avoid inappropriate tests that offer little value and that expose patients to unnecessary risk harm. Therefore, it is important that residents engage in active learning about resources stewardship. A newly formed subcommittee within PGME can help to bring together representatives across departments that can lead in the design, implementation, evaluation, and eventual dissemination of educational programs aimed at teaching residents how to deliver high value appropriate care to patients.

January 2014

Adapted from Dr. Brian M. Wong