EVALUATION OF A MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS EDUCATIONAL TRACK FOR PHYSICAL THERAPY STUDENTS

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INTRODUCTION
The Education and Scholarship Track in Multiple Sclerosis (MS) is a unique collaboration between the University of North Carolina, Division of Physical Therapy and National MS Society, Greater Carolinas Chapter. The curriculum was created in response to a community need for physical therapists with expertise in the management of neurological and psychosocial needs of people living with MS.

OBJECTIVES
The desired outcome of the program is to graduate Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) students with an MS specific competency base. The goal is to enhance the MS-related competencies of an annual cohort of two DPT students in five main areas:
- Didactic Learning
- Clinical Experience
- Community Outreach and Service
- Advocacy
- Educational Instruction
The program also intends to graduate DPT students who impact the MS community beyond graduation.

METHODS
Students are evaluated biannually through quantitative measures including: MS Competencies Rating Scale, MS Activity Tracking Form, and Graduate Scholar Survey. Competencies are student-evaluated in the following 12 areas: 1) knowledge of MS, 2) advanced knowledge of MS, 3) knowledge of public policy and service systems, 4) interdisciplinary teams and interagency planning, 5) assessment and outcomes, 6) implementation of treatment plans and services, 7) involvement with individuals with MS, caregivers, and communities of care, 8) program and project evaluation, 9) legal, ethical and moral issues, 10) program/project management, 11) health care delivery systems and MS, and 12) research. Additional data is gathered about the number of people reached through various scholar activities.

RESULTS AND OUTCOMES
The student mean (n=8) across the 12 competencies prior to the MS track (pre-year 1) was below average (mean = 2.14). Following the first year of the MS track (post-year 1) competencies (n=6) were rated as average/above average (mean= 3.54). The student mean (n=4) at the end of the 2-year MS track (post-year 2) were consistently rated as above average/excellent (4.44). See Figure 1.

Figure 1: Mean values from MS Competencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency Area</th>
<th>Related Activities</th>
<th>Frequency*</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Didactic Learning</td>
<td>• Journal Club&lt;br&gt;• MS Teleconferences&lt;br&gt;• MS readings&lt;br&gt;• MS related projects (exam projects on exercise, fatigue, aquatic therapy, Pilates rehab, etc. capstone projects)</td>
<td>Quarterly</td>
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<td>Clinical Experience</td>
<td>• Review exercise DVDs for Eastern NC NMS&lt;br&gt;• MS related site observations (Infections, neurology, PT, etc.)&lt;br&gt;• 4-week clinical rotation with focus on Neurology/MS</td>
<td>1x semester</td>
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<td>Community Outreach and Service</td>
<td>• Provide assistance at home to local individuals with MS&lt;br&gt;• MS related site observations (Infections, neurology, PT, etc.)&lt;br&gt;• 4-week clinical rotation with focus on Neurology/MS</td>
<td>1x week</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advocacy and Fundraising</td>
<td>• Complete MS and NMS related site observations (Infections, neurology, PT, etc.)&lt;br&gt;• 4-week clinical rotation with focus on Neurology/MS</td>
<td>2x year</td>
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<td>Education and Training</td>
<td>• MS specific in-service for Rehab departments during clinical rotation&lt;br&gt;• Present at local MS Self-help groups on the role of Physical Therapy and Exercise&lt;br&gt;• Development of Problem Based Learning Curriculum</td>
<td>1x year</td>
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Figure 2: 2011 Preliminary Data- Impact of 2 MS Scholar graduates

CONCLUSIONS
Based on evaluations, the MS Education Track provides appropriate curriculum-based specialty training to four scholars interested in working with the MS patient population. Post-Year 2 evaluation outcomes were used to continue to enhance scholarship opportunities. The Graduate Scholar Survey analysis show increased involvement in MS experiences beyond graduation. Future evaluation measures will be expanded to track post-graduate job placement, scholarship and leadership related to this patient population.

SUMMARY OF USE
This unique program addresses the challenges of people living with MS through specialized training for DPT students at UNC-Chapel Hill. It is our goal that this curriculum will serve as a collaborative educational model for other universities and organizations to meet the needs of students interested in a particular patient population, as well as increase access for populations in need of specialized physical therapy care.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
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