



## GASTROENTEROLOGY CLERKSHIP

Alan Hilgerson, D.O., F.A.C.P.  
Assistant Professor of Medicine  
515-271-1490

Office for Clinical Affairs  
515-271-1629  
FAX 515-271-1727

### **General Description**

#### **Elective Rotation**

This elective rotation of four (4) weeks in a gastroenterology clerkship is intended to be a structured clinical experience under direct supervision. In a short time, all of gastroenterology cannot possibly be covered. This must, therefore, be considered an introductory experience. This rotation is a time to build a foundation in clinical problem-solving and decision-making; a time to build clinical experience and acumen on a foundation of didactic information. A post-rotation examination is not required.

#### **Purpose**

Clinical experiences are intended to assist the student's transition from didactic to integrated clinical evaluation and patient management. In addition to gaining specific skills, the student should also develop skill in systematic medical problem-solving and patient management abilities; establish or reinforce patterns of independent learning and self-evaluation; and improve skills in communication and medical record keeping. Under supervision, students are expected to assist in the management of acute and chronic problems. The student should also develop fundamental psychomotor skills by performing routine basic procedures under direct supervision.

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

#### **General Overview**

At the completion of the gastroenterology clerkship, the student should be able to:

- Carry out the initial history and physical examination and plan the diagnostic work-up for the more common gastrointestinal disorders
- Recognize the normal anatomical structures on a flat plate (KUB), CT of the abdomen, upper and lower gastrointestinal series, plus imaging studies of the hepatobiliary system
- Discuss the indications for upper GI endoscopy, colonoscopy, laparoscopy, liver biopsy, retrograde cannulation of the hepatic and pancreatic ducts systems and list the type of information available from these procedures
- Discuss the indications for surgery and its management in the more commonly encountered gastrointestinal disorders

- Discuss the initial laboratory work up and therapeutic program for a patient with gastrointestinal hemorrhage, cholelithiasis, jaundice, peptic ulcer, diverticular disease, and the more commonly encountered gastrointestinal disorders
- Plan a treatment program for a patient with the more common gastrointestinal disorders
- Interpret the following tests of gastrointestinal function: acid and pancreatic secretion studies, liver function studies, small intestinal function tests, esophageal manometry and apply them to the management of patients with gastrointestinal disease.

The curriculum detailed below (adapted from the CDIM-SGIM Core Medicine Clerkship Curriculum Guide Ver.3.0) specifies and prioritizes course objectives in terms of the basic internal medicine core clinical competencies and the specific learning objectives (knowledge, skills, and attitudes) pertinent to those competencies. **Every effort should be made to integrate them into the gastroenterology clerkship.**

## Detailed General Clinical Competencies

### DIAGNOSTIC DECISION-MAKING

#### Rationale:

Physicians are responsible for directing and conducting the diagnostic evaluation of a broad range of patients, including patients seeking advice on prevention of and screening for disease and patients with acute and chronic gastrointestinal illnesses. In a time of rapidly proliferating tests, medical students must learn how to design safe, expeditious, and cost-effective diagnostic evaluations. This requires well-developed diagnostic decision-making skills that incorporate probability-based thinking.

#### Specific learning objectives:

- A. Knowledge:** Students should be able to define, describe, and discuss:
1. Key history and physical examination findings pertinent to the differential diagnosis. (*MK, OPP*)
  2. Information resources for determining diagnostic options for patients with common and uncommon gastrointestinal problems. (*MK, PLI*)
  3. How critical pathways or practice guidelines can be used to guide diagnostic test ordering. (*MK*)
- B. Skills:** Students should demonstrate specific skills, including:
1. Identifying problems with which a patient presents, appropriately synthesizing these into logical clinical syndromes. (*PC*)
  2. Identifying which problems are of highest priority. (*PC*)
  3. Formulating a differential diagnosis based on the findings from the history and physical examination. (*PC, OPP*)
  4. Using the differential diagnosis to help guide diagnostic test ordering and sequencing. (*PC*)
  5. Communicating the prioritized differential diagnosis to the patient and his or her family. (*CS*)
- C. Attitudes and professional Behaviors:** Students should be able to:
1. Incorporate the patient's perspective into diagnostic decision making. (*P*)
  2. Seek feedback regularly regarding diagnostic decision-making and respond appropriately (*P*)
  3. Recognize the importance of and demonstrate a commitment to the utilization of other health care professionals in diagnostic decision making. (*P, SBP*)

#### **AOA Competencies:**

PC = Patient Care  
MK = Medical Knowledge  
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## CASE PRESENTATION SKILLS

### Rationale:

Communicating patient care information to colleagues and other health care professionals is an essential skill regardless of specialty. Internists have traditionally given special attention to case presentation skills because of the comprehensive nature of patient evaluations and the various settings in which internal medicine is practiced. Students should develop facility with different types of case presentations: written and oral, new patient and follow-up, inpatient and outpatient.

### Specific learning objectives:

- A. Knowledge:** Students should be able to define, describe, and discuss components of comprehensive and abbreviated case presentations (oral and written) and settings appropriate for each. *(MK)*
- B. Skills:** Students should be able to demonstrate specific skills, including:
1. Prepare legible, comprehensive, and focused new patient workups that include the following features as clinically appropriate:
    - Concise history of the present illness organized chronologically with minimal repetition, omission, or extraneous information, and including pertinent positives and negatives. *(PC, CS)*
    - A comprehensive physical examination with detail pertinent to the patient's problem. *(PC, CS, OPP)*
    - A succinct, prioritized, and, where appropriate, complete list of all problems identified by the history and physical examination. *(PC, CS, OPP)*
    - A differential diagnosis for each problem (appropriate for the student's level of training). *(PC, CS)*
    - A diagnostic and treatment plan for each problem (appropriate for the student's level of training). *(PC, CS, OPP)*
  2. Orally present a new inpatient's or outpatient's case in a logical manner, chronologically developing the present illness, summarizing the pertinent positive and negative findings as well as the differential diagnosis and plans for further testing and treatment. *(PC, CS)*
  3. Orally present a follow-up patient's case, in a focused, problem-based manner that includes pertinent new findings and diagnostic and treatment plans. *(PC, CS)*
  4. Select the mode of presentation that is most appropriate to the clinical situation (e.g. written vs. oral, long vs. short, etc.). *(PC, CS)*
- C. Attitudes and professional behaviors:** Students should be able to:
1. Demonstrate ongoing commitment to improving case presentation skills by regularly seeking feedback on presentations. *(PLI, P)*
  2. Accurately and objectively record and present all data. *(P)*

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## HISTORY-TAKING AND PHYSICAL EXAMINATION

### Rationale:

The ability to obtain an accurate medical history and carefully perform a physical examination is fundamental to providing comprehensive care to adult patients. In particular, the internist must be thorough and efficient in obtaining a history and performing a physical examination with a wide variety of patients, including healthy adults (both young and old), adults with acute and chronic gastrointestinal problems, adults with complex life-threatening diseases, and adults from diverse socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. The optimal selection of diagnostic tests, choice of treatment, and use of subspecialists, as well as the physician's relationship and rapport with patients, all depend on well-developed history-taking and physical diagnosis skills. These skills, which are fundamental to effective patient care, should be a primary focus of the student's work during the cardiology clerkship.

### Specific learning objectives:

- A. Knowledge:** Students should be able to define, describe, and discuss:
1. The significant attributes of a symptom, including: location and radiation, intensity, quality, temporal sequence (onset, duration, frequency), alleviating factors, aggravating factors, setting, associated symptoms, functional impairment, and patient's interpretation of symptom. *(MK, OPP)*
  2. The four methods of physical examination (inspection, palpation, percussion, and auscultation), including where and when to use them, their purposes, and the findings they elicit. *(MK, OPP)*
  3. The physiologic mechanisms that explain key findings in the history and physical exam. *(MK, OPP)*
  4. The diagnostic value of the history and physical examination. *(MK, OPP)*
- B. Skills:** Students should be able to demonstrate specific skills, including:
1. Using language appropriate for each patient. *(PC, CS)*
  2. Eliciting the patient's chief complaint as well as a complete list of the patient's concerns. *(PC, CS)*
  3. Obtaining a patient's history in a logical, organized, and thorough manner, covering the history of present illness; past medical history (including usual source of and access to health care, childhood and adult illnesses, injuries, surgical procedures, obstetrical history, psychiatric problems, hospitalizations, transfusions, medications, tobacco and alcohol use, and drug allergies); preventive health measures; social, family, and occupational history; and review of systems.
  4. Demonstrating proper hygienic practices whenever examining a patient. *(PC)*
  5. Properly positioning the patient and self for each part of the physical examination. *(PC)*
  6. Performing a physical examination for a patient in a logical, organized, respectful, and thorough manner, giving attention to the patient's general appearance, vital signs, and pertinent body regions. *(PC)*
  7. Adapting the scope and focus of the history and physical exam appropriately to the medical situation and the time available. *(PC)*

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- C. Attitudes and professional behaviors:** Students should be able to:
1. Recognize the essential contribution of a pertinent history and physical examination to patient care. (*P*)
  2. Establish a habit of updating historical information and repeating important parts of the physical examination during follow-up visits. (*P*)
  3. Demonstrate consideration for the patient's feelings, limitations, and cultural and social background whenever taking a history and performing a physical exam. (*P*)

## INTERPRETATION OF CLINICAL INFORMATION

### **Rationale:**

In the routine course of clinical practice, most physicians are required to order and interpret a wide variety of diagnostic tests and procedures. Determining how these test results will influence clinical decision making and communicating this information to patients in a timely and effective manner are core clinical skills that third-year medical students should possess.

### **Specific learning objectives:**

- A. Knowledge:** Students should be able to:
1. Interpret specific diagnostic tests and procedures that are ordered to evaluate patients who present with common symptoms and diagnoses encountered in the practice of cardiology. (*PC, MK*)
  2. Take into account the important differential diagnostic considerations, including potential diagnostic emergencies. (*PC, MK*)
  3. Define and describe for the tests and procedures listed:
    - Indications for testing. (*PC, MK*)
    - Critical values that require immediate attention. (*PC, MK*)
    - Pathophysiologic implications of abnormal results. (*PC, MK*)
  4. Independently interpret the results of the following laboratory tests:
    - Aminotransferases (ALT, AST), alkaline phosphatase, GGT, bilirubin (conjugated and unconjugated), ammonia, INR, albumin, serologic markers for viral hepatitis, ascites analysis to include serum-ascites albumin gradient and ascites total protein, CEA, fetoprotein, *H. pylori* testing, fecal fat, D-xylose test, B<sub>12</sub>, red cell folate (*PC, MK*)
- B. Skills:** Students should be able to demonstrate specific skills, including:
1. Recording the results of laboratory tests in an organized manner, using flow sheets when appropriate. (*PC*)
- C. Attitudes and professional behaviors:** Students should be able to:
1. Appreciate the importance of follow-up on all diagnostic tests and procedures and timely communication of information to patients and appropriate team members. (*P*)
  2. Personally review medical imaging studies to assess the accuracy and significance of the results. (*P*)

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## THERAPEUTIC DECISION-MAKING

### **Rationale:**

Internists are responsible for directing and coordinating the therapeutic management of patients with a wide variety of gastrointestinal problems, including critically ill patients with complex medical problems and the chronically ill. To manage patients effectively, physicians need basic therapeutic decision-making skills that incorporate both pathophysiologic reasoning and evidence-based knowledge.

### **Specific learning objectives:**

- A. Knowledge:** Students should be able to define, describe, and discuss:
1. Information resources for determining medical and surgical treatment options for patients with common and uncommon gastrointestinal problems. *(MK)*
  2. How to use critical pathways and clinical practice guidelines to help guide therapeutic decision making. *(MK)*
  3. Factors that frequently alter the effects of medications, including drug interactions and compliance problems. *(MK)*
  4. Factors to consider in selecting a medication from within a class of medications. *(MK)*
  5. Factors to consider in monitoring a patient's response to treatment, including potential adverse effects. *(MK)*
  6. Methods of monitoring therapy and how to communicate them in both written and oral form. *(MK)*
- B. Skills:** Students should be able to demonstrate specific skills, including:
1. Formulating an initial therapeutic plan. *(PC)*
  2. Accessing and utilizing, when appropriate, information resources to help develop an appropriate and timely therapeutic plan. *(PC, PLI)*
  3. Writing prescriptions and inpatient orders safely and accurately. *(PC)*
  4. Counseling patients about how to take their medications and what to expect when doing so, including beneficial outcomes and potential adverse effects. *(PC, CS)*
  5. Monitoring response to therapy. *(PC)*
- C. Attitudes and professional behaviors:** Students should be able to:
1. Incorporate the patient in therapeutic decision making, explaining the risks and benefits of treatment. *(CS, P)*
  2. Respect patient's informed choices, including the right to refuse treatment. *(P)*
  3. Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of close follow-up of patients under active care. *(P)*
  4. Recognize the importance of and demonstrate a commitment to the utilization of other health care professionals in therapeutic decision making. *(P, SBP)*

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## GASTROENTEROLOGY DISEASES AND TOPICS

The student is responsible for reviewing these topics during the gastroenterology elective. Introductory information can be found in Internal Medicine Clerkship Guide, 3rd Ed. by Paauw\* and in MKSAP for Students 3<sup>†</sup>, assigned for Year 3 General Internal Medicine clerkship.

- Gastrointestinal bleeding (pp. 147-153\*, pp. 83-88<sup>†</sup>)
- Hepatobiliary and pancreatic disease (pp. 312-329\*, pp. 89-97<sup>†</sup>)
- Abdominal pain (pp. 57-67\*, pp. 75-78<sup>†</sup>)
- Diarrhea (pp. 101-108\*)
- Dyspepsia (pp. 118-125\*)

Students are encouraged to supplement these basic discussions by reference to Cecil Textbook of Medicine 23<sup>rd</sup> Ed or Harrison's Principles of Internal Medicine, 17<sup>th</sup> Ed. and current clinical papers from refereed journals.

- Approach to the Patient with GI Disease
- GI Endoscopy
- Diagnostic Imaging Procedures in Gastroenterology
- Diseases of the Esophagus
  - dysphagia/odynophagia/achalasia
  - gastroesophageal reflux disease
- Acid Peptic Disease and Related Disorders
- Disorders of Absorption
- Inflammatory Bowel Disease
- Irritable Bowel Syndrome
- Diverticular Disease
- Evaluation of Liver Function
- Disorders of the Liver and the Biliary Tract
  - jaundice
  - cirrhosis and complications
  - alcoholic liver disease
  - nonalcoholic steatohepatitis
  - acute viral hepatitis
  - chronic hepatitis
  - cholangitis
  - cholestatic liver disease
  - toxic and drug-induced liver disease
- Hepatic Failure and Liver Transplantation
- Disorders of the Pancreas
  - acute and chronic pancreatitis
- Vascular Diseases of the Gastrointestinal Tract
- Gastrointestinal and Hepatobiliary Cancers

### Implementation

Course objectives are to be accomplished in a College affiliated hospital or clinical facility, under supervision. Course objectives should be covered during the rotation to assure adequate student preparation for Board examinations and other evaluations such as post-rotation examinations. The use of diverse methods appropriate to the individual and the clinical site are encouraged, but patient-centered teaching is optimal.

Didactic methods to achieve required objectives include:

- Reading assignments
- Lectures
- Computer-assisted programs (if available)
- Student attendance at/participation in formal clinical presentations by medical faculty

Clinically oriented teaching methods may include:

- Assignment of limited co-management responsibilities under supervision
- Participation in clinic visits, daily patient rounds and conferences
- Supervised and critiqued clinic work-ups of patients admitted to the service
- Assigned, case-oriented reading case presentations

Three levels of achievement are identified:

- Familiarity with a variety of medical procedures through observation and assisting
- Proficiency in clinical procedures through actual supervised performance
- Awareness of the availability of various medical procedures and their use

**At the beginning of the rotation, the physician/mentor should review expectations/guidelines of performance with the student. On the last day of service, the supervising physician should review the student's performance with the student and have the student sign the evaluation form before submission. A student's signature simply indicates that the student has received a grade directly from the attending; it does not indicate agreement with the grade. Evaluations of students must be completed within two weeks of completion of the rotation.**

## TEXTS AND RESOURCES

### **Required Assignment Texts**

Paauw D.S. et al (Eds.), Internal Medicine Clerkship Guide, 3rd Ed. Mosby, 2008.

Cooper, D.H. et al. The Washington Manual of Medical Therapeutics, 32<sup>nd</sup> Ed., Lippincott Williams Wilkins, 2007.

American College of Physicians, MKSAP for Students 3, 3rd Ed, Philadelphia, ACP, 2005.

### **Required Reference Texts**

Braunwald, E (Eds), Harrison's Principles of Internal Medicine, 17<sup>th</sup> Ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2008.  
(Available through [DMU library portal-AccessMedicine](#))

Or

Goldman, L and Ausiello, D. (Eds), Cecil's Medicine, 23<sup>rd</sup> Ed. Philadelphia, W.B. Saunders, 2008.  
(Available through [DMU library portal-MD Consult](#))

### Optional Reference Text

Barrett, K. E., Gastrointestinal Physiology, McGraw-Hill, 2006. ([Available through DMU library portal-AccessMedicine-Lange physiology series](#))

Feldman, M. et al (Eds), Sleisenger & Fordtran's Gastrointestinal and Liver Disease, 8<sup>th</sup> Ed. Saunders, 2006. ([Available through DMU library portal-MD Consult](#))

## READING ASSIGNMENTS

1. **Review all core topics and diseases listed above.**
2. In-depth reading (Cecil or Harrison) of individual diseases and disorders listed above.

## ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

([Available through DMU library portal](#))

### Evidence-Based Medicine:

- **ACP's PIER-Stat!** Ref- PIER© is a collection of over 400 evidence summaries published by the American College of Physicians. Each module provides authoritative guidance to improve the quality of care.
- **Cochrane Library for Evidence-Based Medicine**-The Cochrane Library contains high-quality, independent evidence to inform healthcare decision-making.
- **DynaMed**-Point-of-care reference resource designed to provide doctors and medical researchers with the best available evidence to support clinical decision-making
- **Info Retriever/ Info POEMS**-Info Retriever instantly presents the best known evidence by searching 7 filtered evidence content and tool databases.
- **ACP Medicine**-ACP Medicine is a comprehensive, evidence-based reference for fast, current answers on the best clinical care.

### Electronic Texts:

- **Gastrointestinal Physiology**-[AccessMedicine](#)
- **Sleisenger & Fordtran's Gastrointestinal and Liver Disease, 8<sup>th</sup> Ed.**-[MD Consult](#)
- **Cecil's Textbook of Medicine**-[MD Consult](#)
- **Harrison's Online**-[AccessMedicine](#)
- **Current Medical Therapy and Diagnosis**-[AccessMedicine](#)
- **The 5 Minute Clinical Consult 2007, 15<sup>th</sup> ed.**-[STAT! Ref](#)
- **MD Consult**-Provides full-text access to approximately 40 medical textbooks, 50 medical journals, comprehensive drug information, and more than 600 clinical practice guidelines
- **Ebsco A-to-Z**-Database provides link and coverage information to more than 124,000 unique titles from more than 1,100 database and e-journal packages.