VA Endocrinology & Metabolism Clinic Goals and Objectives

VAMC, John Cochran Division, VAMC 8th Floor, 8 South
Mondays, 8:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m.
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Educational goal and description of the rotation: ED & M VA Clinic is held one full day per week for 3 months. Fellows in endocrinology, diabetes and metabolism see patients in the ED & M Clinic at the Cochran VA Hospital, typically during the first year, during individual rotations. This is a general endocrinology, diabetes, and metabolism clinic. It includes a subset of patients referred for consultations and those with complex chronic endocrine-metabolic disorders receiving long-term care in the Veterans Affairs system. While patients with an array of socioeconomic backgrounds are seen in the other educational settings, disadvantaged individuals are among the patients seen in the ED & M VA Clinic. Fellows are supervised by Dr. Charles Harris. The educational goal is for fellows to learn how to diagnose and manage endocrine diseases in patients with multiple medical problems.

Educational purpose (curriculum): The specific goals (educational purposes) and objectives of this rotation are to permit the fellow to understand the clinical presentation of outpatients with endocrine-metabolic disorders and to learn to evaluate, diagnose, and treat endocrine-metabolic disorders in the outpatient setting. The specific objectives of this rotation are to teach the fellow to become skilled in the evaluation and treatment of outpatients with a broad array of acute, subacute, or chronic endocrine-metabolic disorders and in the identification of non endocrine-metabolic disorders presenting with symptoms, signs, or laboratory findings suggestive of endocrine-metabolic disorders. The endocrine-metabolic disorders include diabetes; dyslipidemias; metabolic bone disease including osteoporosis, disorders of calcium, phosphorus, and magnesium metabolism; age-related disorders including the menopause and the impact of aging on treatment of endocrine-metabolic disorders; obesity and other nutritional disorders; hypertension; cardiovascular diseases in the setting of endocrine-metabolic disorders; hormone-producing neoplasms; disorders of fluid/electrolyte/acid-base metabolism; endocrine adaptations/maladaptations to systemic diseases including psychiatric disorders; hypothalamic-pituitary disorders; disorders of the thyroid, parathyroid, and pancreatic islets; and adrenocortical, adrenomedullary, ovarian, and testicular disorders. In addition, fellows will see transgender patients during their VA rotations.

Patient Care: Fellows will learn how to—and must demonstrate their ability to—obtain a complete and accurate medical and surgical history coupled with a thorough but targeted physical examinations. Fellows will be asked to interpret radiologic studies as they pertain to bone, thyroid, adrenal, and pituitary disorders. Because laboratory data is the mainstay of endocrinology, the fellows must learn to synthesize a full history of laboratory information into relevant clinical parcels in order to make further recommendations about new or follow-up testing and management. Fellows will be expected to learn both basic and more complex endocrine testing, diagnosis, and management and to apply this knowledge to the VA patients.
**Medical knowledge:** For some fellows, this is their first or one of their first rotations in endocrinology. They are expected to know basic disease processes, commensurate with their level of training and prior rotations. They will be expected to expand their knowledge base considerably during this rotation because of the wide variety of cases and disease entities that are seen at the VA endocrine clinic. Fellows will be expected to know how diseases of the endocrine system are reflected in other chronic disease states, and the impact of other chronic illnesses on endocrine dysfunction. The fellow will begin to understand mechanisms of risk reduction.

**Practice-based learning and improvement:** Fellows will understand the limitations of their prior knowledge and seek to improve their level of expertise in the diagnosis and treatment of many different endocrine problems.

**Interpersonal and communication skills:** Fellows should become proficient in the care of a wide range of patients and be able to communicate effectively with each one. Fellows should understand issues related to lifestyle, other chronic illnesses, and compliance. Fellows should be self-motivated to learn about their patients’ illnesses and management challenges. Fellows should be able to discuss a particular problem with a patient, while understanding his or her background of illness as it relates to the problem(s) under consideration.

**Professionalism:** Fellows should demonstrate respect, compassion, and integrity along with a commitment to optimal patient care. Fellows should learn and utilize behaviors that fully respect the care that other health care providers have contributed.

**Systems–based practice:** Nowhere is systems-based practice more relevant than the VA, with its system of electronic medical records and integrated approach to chronic disease management. Fellows should become proficient with the charting methods and how each system interacts with others to utilize the system optimally.

**Teaching methods:** Dr. Charles Harris, a board-certified endocrinologist, will teach fellows based on the clinical cases seen that day. Teaching is a combination of bedside instruction and case discussion. This is augmented by scheduled conferences on Thursday.

**Mix of diseases:** The VA clinic sees a wide variety of endocrine diseases including osteoporosis, Paget’s disease, thyroid diseases, diabetes, testosterone deficiency, hormone producing tumors, adrenal disease, obesity, and others.

**Reading lists and other educational materials:** Fellows will be encouraged to obtain the endocrine subspecialty manuals and to consult textbooks, Up-to-Date, other review articles, and original articles for information relevant to patient care.