Objectives of Training in the Subspecialty of Geriatric Medicine

This document applies to those who begin training on or after July 1st, 2015.

DEFINITION

Geriatric Medicine is that branch of medicine which is concerned with the prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and social aspects of illness in older people.

GOALS

Upon completion of training, a resident is expected to be a competent Geriatrician, capable of assuming a consultant’s role in the subspecialty. The resident must acquire a working knowledge of the theoretical basis of the subspecialty, including its foundations in science and research, as it applies to medical practice.

Only candidates certified by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada in Internal Medicine may be eligible for certification in Geriatric Medicine.

Residents must demonstrate the requisite knowledge, skills, and behaviours for effective patient-centred care and service to a diverse population. In all aspects of specialist practice, the graduate must be able to address ethical issues and issues of gender, sexual orientation, age, culture, beliefs, and ethnicity in a professional manner.

GERIATRIC MEDICINE COMPETENCIES

At the completion of training, the resident will have acquired the following competencies and will function effectively as a:

Medical Expert

Definition:

As Medical Experts, Geriatricians integrate all of the CanMEDS Roles, applying medical knowledge, clinical skills, and professional attitudes in their provision of patient-centred care. Medical Expert is the central physician Role in the CanMEDS framework.
Key and Enabling Competencies: Geriatricians are able to...

1. Function effectively as consultants, integrating all of the CanMEDS Roles to provide optimal, ethical and patient-centred medical care
   1.1. Perform a consultation, including the presentation of well-documented assessments and recommendations in oral, written, and/or electronic form, in response to a request from another health care professional
   1.2. Demonstrate effective use of all CanMEDS competencies relevant to Geriatric Medicine
   1.3. Identify and appropriately respond to relevant ethical issues arising in patient care
   1.4. Demonstrate the ability to prioritize professional duties when faced with multiple patients and problems
   1.5. Demonstrate compassionate and patient-centred care
   1.6. Recognize and respond to the ethical dimensions in medical decision-making
       1.6.1. Demonstrate the ability to identify specific age-associated ethical issues in clinical practice and the allocation of health care resources including but not limited to distributive justice, filial responsibility, and proxy decision-making
   1.7. Demonstrate medical expertise in situations other than patient care, such as providing expert legal testimony or advising governments, as needed

2. Establish and maintain clinical knowledge, skills and behaviour appropriate to Geriatric Medicine
   2.1. Demonstrate knowledge of normal aging, including physiology, biology, psychology, and theories of aging
   2.2. Apply knowledge of the clinical, socio-behavioural, and fundamental biomedical sciences relevant to Geriatric Medicine, which includes but is not limited to:
       2.2.1. Impact of age on common medical conditions
       2.2.2. Management of common medical conditions in the older adult
       2.2.3. Diagnosis and management of the older adult with multiple, complex medical conditions or syndromes, including but not limited to
           2.2.3.1. Frailty
           2.2.3.2. Delirium
           2.2.3.3. Dementia, including behavioural and psychological symptoms
           2.2.3.4. Mild cognitive impairment (MCI)
           2.2.3.5. Falls and mobility issues
           2.2.3.6. Bowel and bladder dysfunction
           2.2.3.7. Pain
2.2.3.8. Immobility and its complications
2.2.3.9. Palliative and end-of-life care
2.2.3.10. Mood disorders and other psychiatric manifestations
2.2.3.11. Osteoporosis, bone, and metabolic disorders

2.3. Demonstrate knowledge of principles of prescribing medications for the older adult, including but not limited to:
   2.3.1. Pharmacokinetic and pharmacodynamic changes that occur with aging
   2.3.2. Adverse drug effects, including adverse drug-drug and drug-disease interactions and the prescribing cascade
   2.3.3. Appropriate prescription of drugs including but not limited to the impact of frailty, life-expectancy and multiple co-morbidities
   2.3.4. Promotion of adherence to a prescribed drug regimen
   2.3.5. Medication reconciliation

2.4. Describe the CanMEDS framework of competencies relevant to Geriatric Medicine
2.5. Apply lifelong learning skills of the Scholar Role to implement a personal program to keep up to date, and enhance areas of professional competence
2.6. Integrate the available best evidence and best practices to enhance quality of care and patient safety in Geriatric Medicine
   2.6.1. Demonstrate an understanding of basic principles of patient safety
   2.6.2. Demonstrate knowledge of best practice for safe care of older adult patients including but not limited to least restraints, falls prevention, pressure ulcer prevention, antibiotic stewardship and prevention of iatrogenic and other complications
   2.6.3. Demonstrate an understanding of the principles of senior friendly hospitals

3. Perform a complete and appropriate assessment of a patient

3.1. Identify and effectively explore issues to be addressed in a patient encounter, including the patient’s context and preferences
   3.1.1. Assess an older person with multiple physical, cognitive/psychiatric, functional, and/or social problems. This incorporates the concept of comprehensive geriatric assessment, which requires evaluation of medical, functional, cognitive-affective and socio-environmental domain
   3.1.2. Assess an older person for their capacity to consent to treatment, make personal decisions, make financial decisions, drive a motor vehicle, and make wills and testaments
   3.1.3. Apply accepted recommendations for primary and secondary prevention measures relevant to Geriatric Medicine
   3.1.4. Assess an older patient for need and potential for rehabilitation
3.1.5. Identify the prognostic factors related to age, diagnosis, and comorbidities, leading to a discussion about the appropriate level of intervention based on the patient’s wishes and clinical context

3.1.6. Recognize the signs of abuse of older patients, identify risk factors and propose a management plan in conjunction with the clinical team

3.1.7. Demonstrate the ability to identify the presence and capabilities of caregiver(s) to meet the needs of older patients

3.1.8. Recognize the level of stress of caregivers, identify risk factors for caregiver burnout and propose a management plan in conjunction with the clinical team

3.2. Elicit a history that is relevant, clear, concise, and accurate to context and preferences, for the purposes of diagnosis, management, health promotion, and disease prevention, including but not limited to:

3.2.1. Skill in working with older adults with significant communication challenges due to cognitive impairment, sensory impairment, behavioral problems or ethno-cultural differences

3.2.2. Collateral history

3.2.3. Detailed medication history

3.2.4. Assessment of basic and instrumental activities of daily living, including assessment of risk, using standardized, valid, and reliable instruments

3.3. Perform a focused physical examination that is relevant and accurate for the purposes of diagnosis, management, health promotion, and disease prevention, including but not limited to:

3.3.1. Comprehensive neurological exam

3.3.2. Screening assessments of vision and hearing

3.3.3. Mental status examination

3.3.3.1. Evaluation of cognition using standardized, valid, and reliable instruments

3.3.3.2. Evaluation of psychiatric conditions including but not limited to mood disorders and the behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia using standardized, valid, and reliable instruments

3.3.4. Assessment of basic mobility skills and balance using standardized, valid, and reliable instruments

3.3.5. Performance and interpretation of a nutritional assessment of older patients using anthropometric, historical, dietary, subjective and/or laboratory features

3.3.6. Assessment for fecal/urinary incontinence
3.4. Select medically appropriate investigative methods in a resource-effective and ethical manner
   3.4.1. Demonstrate the ability to weigh the relative benefits and risks of investigations and interventions that are being proposed for older patients

3.5. Demonstrate effective clinical problem solving and judgment to address patient problems, including interpreting available data and integrating information to generate differential diagnoses and management plans
   3.5.1. Demonstrate the ability to deal effectively and efficiently with clinical complexity by prioritizing problems
   3.5.2. Demonstrate the ability to tailor health promotion and disease prevention activities to the older person’s functional status, goals, and preferences
   3.5.3. Demonstrate the ability to plan and implement rehabilitation in collaboration with older patients, their families, attending physicians, consultants, and other health care professionals. This must include setting treatment goals, predicting likely outcome, and determining the likely duration of the course of rehabilitation

4. Use preventive and therapeutic interventions effectively
   4.1. Implement an effective management plan in collaboration with patients and their families
      4.1.1. Demonstrate an understanding of family dynamics and those factors which impact the implementation of a management plan
      4.1.2. Identify the presence and capabilities of caregivers for older disabled patients
      4.1.3. Demonstrate the ability to detect and manage caregiver stress
   4.2. Demonstrate appropriate and timely application of preventive and therapeutic interventions relevant to Geriatric Medicine
   4.3. Obtain appropriate informed consent for therapies
   4.4. Ensure patients receive appropriate end-of-life care

5. Demonstrate proficient and appropriate use of procedural skills, both diagnostic and therapeutic
   5.1. Demonstrate effective, appropriate, and timely performance of diagnostic procedures relevant to Geriatric Medicine
      5.1.1. Perform and interpret an environmental safety assessment, including the patient’s home
   5.2. Demonstrate effective, appropriate, and timely performance of therapeutic procedures relevant to Geriatric Medicine
5.3. Obtain appropriate informed consent for procedures
5.4. Document and disseminate information related to procedures performed and their outcomes
5.5. Ensure adequate followup is arranged for procedures performed

6. **Seek appropriate consultation from other health professionals, recognizing the limits of their expertise**

6.1. Demonstrate insight into their own limits of expertise
6.2. Demonstrate effective, appropriate, and timely consultation of another health professional as needed for optimal patient care
6.3. Arrange appropriate followup care services for patients and their families

**Communicator**

**Definition:**

As *Communicators*, Geriatricians effectively facilitate the doctor-patient relationship and the dynamic exchanges that occur before, during, and after the medical encounter.

**Key and Enabling Competencies: Geriatricians are able to...**

1. **Develop rapport, trust, and ethical therapeutic relationships with patients and their families**

   1.1. Recognize that being a good communicator is a core clinical skill for physicians, and that effective physician-patient communication can foster patient satisfaction, physician satisfaction, adherence and improved clinical outcomes

   1.2. Establish positive therapeutic relationships with patients and their families that are characterized by understanding, trust, respect, honesty and empathy

      1.2.1. Demonstrate skill in working with older patients who present significant communication challenges because of cognitive impairment, sensory impairments, behavioural problems, or ethno-cultural backgrounds different from the physician’s own

   1.3. Respect patient confidentiality, privacy and autonomy

      1.3.1. Balance confidentiality and privacy with the need for communication and collaboration within the circle of care of the older adult

1.4. Listen effectively

1.5. Be aware of and responsive to nonverbal cues

   1.5.1. Recognize and respond to non-verbal cues from patients with various conditions including but not limited to cognitive impairment, pain, delirium, and behavioural disturbances
1.6. Facilitate a structured clinical encounter effectively

2. Accurately elicit and synthesize relevant information and perspectives of patients and families, colleagues, and other professionals
   2.1. Gather information about a disease and about a patient’s beliefs, concerns, expectations and illness experience
   2.2. Seek out and synthesize relevant information from other sources, such as a patient’s family, caregivers and other professionals, while respecting individual privacy and confidentiality

3. Convey relevant information and explanations accurately to patients and families, colleagues and other professionals
   3.1. Deliver information to patients and their families, colleagues, and other professionals in a humane manner and in such a way that it is understandable and encourages discussion and participation in decision-making

4. Develop a common understanding on issues, problems and plans with patients, their families, and other professionals to develop a shared plan of care
   4.1. Identify and explore problems to be addressed from a patient encounter effectively, including the patient’s context, responses, concerns, and preferences
   4.2. Respect diversity and differences, including but not limited to the impact of gender, religion and cultural beliefs on decision-making
   4.3. Encourage discussion, questions, and interaction in the encounter
   4.4. Engage patients, their families, and relevant health professionals in shared decision-making to develop a plan of care
   4.5. Address challenging communication issues effectively, including but not limited to obtaining informed consent, delivering bad news, and addressing anger, confusion, and misunderstanding

5. Convey oral, written, and/or electronic information effectively about a medical encounter
   5.1. Maintain clear, accurate, and appropriate records (e.g., written or electronic) of clinical encounters and plans
   5.2. Present verbal reports of clinical encounters and plans
   5.3. Present medical information effectively to the public or media about a medical issue
6. **Present medical information effectively to the public or media about a medical issue**

**Collaborator**

**Definition:**

As *Collaborators*, Geriatricians effectively work within a health care team to achieve optimal patient care.

**Key and Enabling Competencies: Geriatricians are able to...**

1. **Participate effectively and appropriately in an interprofessional health care team**
   1.1. Describe the Geriatrician’s roles and responsibilities to other professionals
   1.2. Identify and describe the role and the scope of practice of members of the core interprofessional team involved in the care of older patients. Members of this core team include individuals with expertise in clinical nutrition, nursing, occupational therapy, pharmacy, physiotherapy, social work, and speech language pathology
   1.3. Recognize and respect the diverse roles, responsibilities, and competencies of other professionals in relation to their own
   1.4. Work with others to assess, plan, provide, and integrate care for older patients or groups of patients, including investigation, treatment and followup care. This must be done with the input of the older patients or their proxy if the patients are unable to consent to health care
      1.4.1. Demonstrate principles of case management
      1.4.2. Assure that individual responsibilities in a specific care plan are explicit
      1.4.3. Demonstrate the ability to work effectively with the family physician and other primary health care providers
      1.4.4. Collaborate with others to develop a care plan that balances patient autonomy and safety, addressing the right to live at risk
   1.5. Work collaboratively in other activities and tasks; examples are research, educational work, program review, and/or administrative responsibilities
   1.6. Demonstrate effective contribution as a member and leader of interprofessional teams and family meetings
      1.6.1. Demonstrate the ability to effectively facilitate team and family meetings which include older adults with cognitive or sensory challenges, balancing the needs of the patient and their caregivers with the needs of the other participants
   1.7. Enter into interdependent relationships with other professions for the provision of quality care
1.8. Describe the principles of team dynamics
   1.8.1. Demonstrate both knowledge of critical concepts and the skills needed for the effective functioning of interprofessional clinical teams

1.9. Respect team ethics, including confidentiality, resource allocation and professionalism

1.10. Demonstrate leadership in a health care team, as appropriate

2. Work with other health professionals effectively to prevent, negotiate, and resolve interprofessional conflict
   2.1. Demonstrate a respectful attitude towards colleagues and members of an interprofessional team
   2.2. Work with other professionals to prevent conflicts
       2.2.1. Identify potential conflicts that may occur in an interprofessional team
   2.3. Demonstrate abilities in conflict management and negotiation
   2.4. Respect differences and address misunderstandings and limits of scope of practice in other professions
   2.5. Reflect on their own differences, misunderstandings, and limitations that may contribute to interprofessional tension
   2.6. Reflect on interprofessional team function
       2.6.1. Identify the characteristics of effective and dysfunctional teams
       2.6.2. Identify strategies for fostering a functional team and managing a dysfunctional team
       2.6.3. Demonstrate the skills needed to promote effective team functioning

Manager

Definition:

As Managers, Geriatricians are integral participants in health care organizations, organizing sustainable practices, making decisions about allocating resources, and contributing to the effectiveness of the health care system.

Key and Enabling Competencies: Geriatricians are able to...

1. Participate in activities that contribute to the effectiveness of their health care organizations and systems
   1.1. Work collaboratively with others in their organizations
       1.1.1. Describe how the organization works including organizational structure and reporting relationships
1.2. Participate in systemic quality process evaluation and improvement including, but not limited to, patient safety initiatives

1.3. Describe the structure and function of the health care system as it relates to Geriatric Medicine, including the roles of physicians

1.3.1. Demonstrate the ability to promote integrated care of older patients, especially those with complex needs, and ease transitions among a variety of settings where they may receive services, including but not limited to the patient’s home, ambulatory care settings, hospitals, long-term care facilities, and other health care settings

1.3.1.1. Describe local resources and agencies that provide health and social care

1.3.2. Demonstrate knowledge of the principles used to plan and manage health care services for older patients in a variety of settings, including but not limited to the patient’s home, ambulatory care settings, hospitals, long-term care facilities, and other health care settings

1.3.2.1. Demonstrate the ability to identify opportunities and challenges, consider alternative strategies, and select the preferred means of health care service provision for older adults

1.3.2.2. Demonstrate the ability to collect and analyze data on outcomes of care, and act upon the findings to identify changes which might improve the outcomes of care

1.4. Describe principles of health care financing, including physician remuneration, budgeting and organizational funding

2. Manage their practice and career effectively

2.1. Set priorities and manage time to balance patient care, practice requirements, outside activities, and personal life

2.2. Manage a practice, including finances and human resources

2.3. Implement processes to ensure personal practice improvement

2.4. Employ information technology appropriately for patient care

3. Allocate finite health care resources appropriately

3.1. Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of just allocation of health care resources, balancing effectiveness, efficiency, and access with optimal patient care

3.2. Apply evidence and management processes for cost-appropriate care

4. Serve in administration and leadership roles, as appropriate

4.1. Participate effectively in committees and meetings
4.2. Lead or implement change in health care
   4.2.1. Demonstrate knowledge of strategies used in the implementation of evidence-based geriatric care including but not limited to delirium prevention programs, falls prevention programs, least restraints policies and clinical practice guidelines

4.3. Plan relevant elements of health care delivery in a variety of settings, including but not limited to the patient’s home, ambulatory care settings, hospitals, long-term care facilities, and other health care settings

Health Advocate

Definition:

As Health Advocates, Geriatricians responsibly use their expertise and influence to advance the health and well-being of individual patients, communities, and populations.

Key and Enabling Competencies: Geriatricians are able to...

1. Respond to individual patient health needs and issues as part of patient care
   1.1. Identify the health needs of an individual older adult
       1.1.1. Identify specific patient vulnerabilities that increase the risk that the health care system will be unable to meet the patient’s needs, including but not limited to inadequate social support, inadequate access to primary care, and chronic, complex, physical, and mental health issues
   1.2. Identify opportunities for advocacy, health promotion, and disease prevention with older individuals to whom they provide care
       1.2.1. Advocate for evidence-based health promotion, including but not limited to regular physical and cognitive exercise, adequate nutrition, and vaccination
   1.3. Demonstrate an appreciation of the possibility of competing interests between individual advocacy issues and the community at large
   1.4. Advocate against ageism at the individual patient level

2. Respond to the health needs of the communities that they serve
   2.1. Describe the practice communities that they serve, including but not limited to health care and community resources available for older adults
2.2. Identify opportunities for advocacy, health promotion and disease prevention in the communities that they serve, and respond appropriately

2.2.1. Demonstrate an understanding of the Geriatrician’s role to advocate on behalf of the community with respect to the determinants of health that may impact older adults, including but not limited to access to in-home care, community based services, long term care and senior friendly hospitals

2.3. Demonstrate an appreciation of the possibility of competing interests between the communities served and other populations

3. Identify the determinants of health for the older adult population

3.1. Identify the determinants of health for older adults, including barriers to access to care, and resources

3.1.1. Identify evidence-based determinants of health for older adults, including but not limited to financial resources, education, and social support systems, and apply this understanding to advocate for population-based solutions to common problems and conditions in Geriatric Medicine

3.1.2. Identify variations in the determinants of health related to population differences including but not limited to ethno-cultural differences, gender and sexual orientation

3.2. Identify vulnerable or marginalized populations within the older adult population, and respond appropriately

4. Promote the health of older adult populations

4.1. Describe an approach to implementing a change in a determinant of health of older patients as a population

4.2. Describe how public policy impacts on the health of older adults

4.2.1. Identify current policies that affect older patients’ health, either positively or negatively, including but not limited to publicly funded drug benefit programs, income support programs, and retirement policies

4.3. Identify points of influence in the health care system relating to the care of older adults, including but not limited to the federal, provincial, municipal, regional and institutional levels

4.4. Describe the ethical and professional issues inherent in health advocacy, including altruism, social justice, autonomy, integrity, and idealism

4.5. Demonstrate an appreciation of the possibility of conflict inherent in their role as a health advocate for a patient or community with that of manager or gatekeeper

4.6. Describe the role of the medical profession in advocating collectively for health and patient safety
5. Advocate for positive attitudes towards older adults, striving to eliminate negative belief systems, including but not limited to ageism and stereotyping of the older adult with cognitive and functional limitations

Scholar

Definition:

As Scholars, Geriatricians demonstrate a lifelong commitment to reflective learning, as well as the creation, dissemination, application and translation of medical knowledge.

Key and Enabling Competencies: Geriatricians are able to...

1. Maintain and enhance professional activities through ongoing learning in Geriatric Medicine
   1.1. Describe the principles of maintenance of competence
   1.2. Describe the principles and strategies for implementing a personal knowledge management system
   1.3. Recognize and reflect on learning issues in practice
   1.4. Conduct personal practice audits
   1.5. Pose an appropriate learning question
   1.6. Access and interpret the relevant evidence
   1.7. Integrate new learning into practice
   1.8. Evaluate the impact of any change in practice
   1.9. Document the learning process

2. Critically evaluate medical information and its sources, and apply this appropriately to practice decisions in Geriatric Medicine
   2.1. Describe the principles of critical appraisal
   2.2. Critically appraise retrieved evidence to address a clinical question
   2.3. Integrate critical appraisal conclusions into clinical care
   2.4. Demonstrate an awareness of the limitations of the scientific literature with regards to generalizability and applicability to an older population

3. Facilitate the learning of patients, their families, students, residents, other health professionals, the public, and others
   3.1. Describe principles of learning relevant to medical education
   3.2. Identify collaboratively the learning needs and desired learning outcomes of others
3.3. Select effective teaching strategies and content to facilitate others’ learning
   3.3.1. Demonstrate effective teaching skills for patients, their families, and
caregivers, utilizing appropriate language and communication techniques

3.4. Deliver effective lectures or presentations

3.5. Assess and reflect on teaching encounters in all contexts relevant to the practice
of Geriatric Medicine

3.6. Provide effective feedback
   3.6.1. Describe the principles of effective feedback

3.7. Describe and demonstrate the principles of ethics with respect to teacher-learner
behaviour

4. **Contribute to the development, dissemination, and translation of new
   knowledge and practices**
   4.1. Describe the principles of research and scholarly inquiry
   4.2. Describe the principles of research ethics
   4.3. Pose a scholarly question relevant to Geriatric Medicine
   4.4. Conduct a systematic search for evidence
   4.5. Select and apply appropriate methods to address the question
   4.6. Disseminate the findings of a study
   4.7. Complete a scholarly research, quality improvement, or educational project
relevant to Geriatric Medicine that is suitable for peer-reviewed publication or
presentation at an academic meeting.

**Professional Definition:**

As *Professionals*, Geriatricians are committed to the health and well-being of individuals and
society through ethical practice, profession-led regulation, and high personal standards of
behaviour.

**Key and Enabling Competencies: are able to...**

1. **Demonstrate a commitment to their patients, profession, and society through
   ethical practice**
   1.1. Exhibit appropriate professional behaviours in practice, including honesty,
   integrity, commitment, compassion, respect, and altruism
   1.2. Demonstrate a commitment to delivering the highest quality care and
1.3. Demonstrate a willingness to receive and act upon both positive and negative feedback from colleagues, other health care workers, older patients, their families, and caregivers

1.4. Recognize and appropriately respond to ethical issues encountered in practice
   1.4.1. Apply an ethical framework in decision making
   1.4.2. Respect patient autonomy when there are decisions that may put the patient at risk

1.5. Identify, declare, and manage perceived, potential, and actual conflicts of interest
   1.5.1. Demonstrate the ability to identify and address personal potential conflicts of interest in all aspects of Geriatric Medicine practice

1.6. Recognize the principles and limits of patient privacy and confidentiality as defined by professional practice standards and the law
   1.6.1. Maintain privacy and confidentiality for competent older adults, particularly with respect to adult children and caregivers

1.7. Maintain appropriate boundaries with patients

2. Demonstrate a commitment to their patients, profession, and society through participation in profession-led regulation
   2.1. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of professional, legal, and ethical codes of practice
   2.2. Fulfil the regulatory and legal obligations required of current practice, which includes but is not limited to:
       2.2.1. Advance directives
       2.2.2. Power of attorney
       2.2.3. Guardianship
       2.2.4. Trusteeship
       2.2.5. Operation of a motor vehicle
   2.3. Demonstrate accountability to professional regulatory bodies
   2.4. Recognize and respond appropriately to others’ unprofessional behaviours in practice
   2.5. Participate in peer review
3. **Demonstrate a commitment to physician health and sustainable practice**

3.1. Balance personal and professional priorities to ensure personal health and a sustainable practice

3.2. Strive to heighten personal and professional awareness and insight

3.3. Recognize other professionals in need and respond appropriately

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