

Case-based learning in pediatric rheumatology: An effective method for teaching the Medical Expert Role

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Assessment of patients with suspected rheumatic disease often proves to be a challenging task for pediatric residents. The complexity of cases and lack of easily applicable diagnostic criteria for many rheumatic disorders can hinder the learning process. To improve the resident's problem-solving skills in a complex clinical scenario, we developed a case-based learning (CBL) course for pediatric residents in our division.

During the 4-week rotation in the Division of Rheumatology, the residents actively participate in a CBL course that consists of 4 weekly sessions, each of 30 minutes' duration. A case databank was established from which cases are chosen to reflect the spectrum of clinical problems encountered by the resident in the past 7 days. All cases are open ended and allow for discussion, modification and adjustment of the clinical scenario as necessary. Each resident is to complete an anonymous detailed evaluation of the teaching module at the end of their rotation.

The course is highly valued among the residents and consistently rated as very beneficial for thought organization, application of knowledge and learning organization. This illustrates the usefulness of CBL in teaching of pediatric Rheumatology.

In our experience, CBL greatly contributes to residents' understanding of complex rheumatologic disorders in the pediatric population, such as systemic lupus erythematosus, inflammatory myopathies and vasculitides, which ultimately leads to improvement of residents' analytic skills in a clinical setting and their role as Medical Expert.