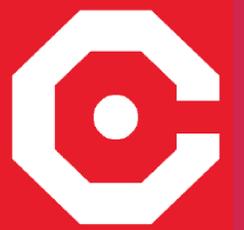




# Internal Medicine and Subspecialties: Shadowing Opportunities for Preclinical Students During COVID-19 Pandemic



N. F. Morris; L. Matlack; N. Sathe, MD; I.M. Di Bartolo, MD  
Cooper Medical School of Rowan University

## Introduction

Clinical exposure to various specialties is critical to the development of future doctors as it provides insight into physician responsibilities. These opportunities were greatly diminished at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and prevented students from being able to interact with providers. With high physician burnout, there is a scarcity of mentors for students in their preclinical years. Physicians were busier than usual, which made it more challenging to contact them through email and in person. Throughout the pandemic, preclinical students were frequently unable to rotate in the hospital to decrease infection transmission. In response to this lack, the Internal Medicine Interest Group at Cooper Medical School of Rowan University has developed a hospital-based shadowing program for Internal Medicine to equip students with the knowledge and experience to enter their clinical years without needing to contact multiple departments, thus alleviating any additional obstacles.

## AIM

To centralize shadowing opportunities by eliminating individual students from having to contact multiple attendings in the Internal Medicinal and subspecialty departments, and providing sessions during quieter hospital hours and in locations where fewer third and fourth year clinical students are rotating.

## Methods

- This program was initiated in the Internal Medicine department at Cooper University Hospital in Camden, NJ.
- Sessions are held on Sundays from 7-10pm.
- The Internal Medicine Interest Group leaders performed a trial run of the program before opening enrollment to the student body.
- A sign up sheet is then electronically distributed to pre-clinical first and second year students on a first come, first served basis.
- A waitlist was initiated to provide increased number of students opportunities, should another student be unable to attend.
- Students and the Chief Resident are emailed the Friday before each session with reminders and directions for the evening.
- Students were emailed pre and post session questionnaires to evaluate student satisfaction, number of patients they interacted with and difficulties perceived in working with residents.

## Results

- After completion of the shadowing experience, students were emailed a five-question survey. Of the 13 students who completed a session the response rate was 84.6%.
- Students were asked on a 1-5 scale their interest in IM after shadowing. 45.5% responded with a 3, 45.5% with a 4, and 9.1% with a 5 on the interest scale.
- On a scale of 0-10 with 0 being the worst and 10 being the best, students were asked to rate their experience. The average was a 7.18/10 with a range of 6 (high:9, low:3).
- On a scale of 1-5 for how likely students were to recommend this experience to their peers, 81.9% of students indicated a 4 or 5.
- Every student was able to see at least one patient during their experience. Additionally, 36.4% students were able to have hands-on experience with patients, which included physical examination and/or patient interviewing.
- Since the submission of this abstract, 44 students have completed a shadowing experience.

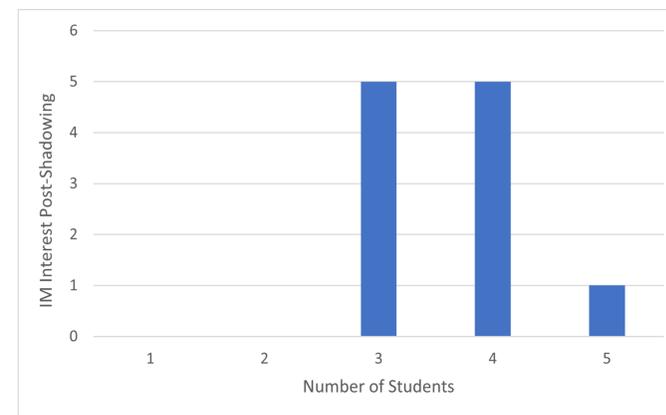


Figure 1. Student IM interest after shadowing

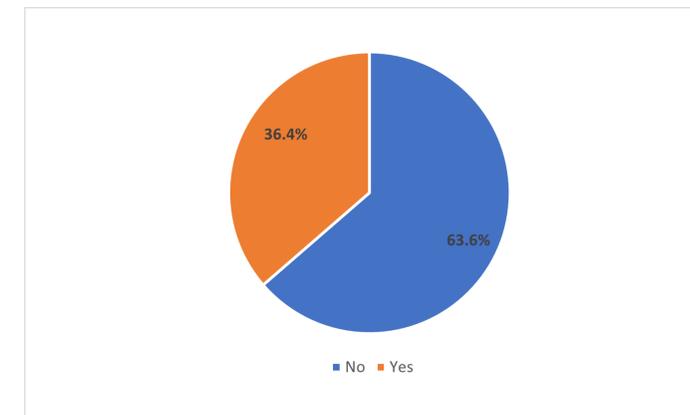


Figure 2. Percent of students with hands-on experience during shadowing

## Conclusion

- A centralized sign up sheet for multiple departments and two specific MS-2 students contacting departments increased student sign up.
- Improvement in communication between the program and the residents working during each session so they are aware of the preclinical students attending.
- Future directions include maintaining the program through transition of leadership both at the medical school and in the hospital.
- Coordination and sign-ups were initiated for gastroenterology endoscopy suite shadowing and cardiac catheterization lab sessions.
- Implementing endocrinology clinic shadowing.

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## Contact Information

- Natalie Morris, MS-2: [morris84@rowan.edu](mailto:morris84@rowan.edu)
- Lauren Matlack, MS-2: [matlac42@rowan.edu](mailto:matlac42@rowan.edu)