

The Geriatric Assessment Unit (GAU) is situated at The Ottawa Hospital, Civic Campus and thus it is an acute care setting. Patients are transferred from either campus of TOH, typically after a fracture from orthopaedics; from CTU or surgery with complex issues (including the geriatric giants); or from other units. Patients may also be admitted from the Day Hospital or the community. The expectation is that they will be discharged back to the community and mean length of stay is approximately two weeks. Currently there are two teams (one 12 bed, one 8 bed). A full inter-professional team supports the GAU. Typically there are other residents (PGY1 or PGY2), geriatric fellows and students that rotate through the unit as well. The COE resident will be expected to manage 8-10 patients by the end of the rotation, assuming primary care for these patients. Patients are seen daily on rounds, and team rounds are held twice weekly.

At the end of the rotation the trainee will be able to:

FAMILY MEDICINE EXPERT ROLE

1. Perform a comprehensive geriatric assessment of an older patient in acute care, placing an emphasis on:
 - a. Physical function
 - b. Cognitive abilities
 - c. Social supports
2. Perform a detailed physical examination of an older inpatient with emphasis on:
 - a. Neurological status
 - b. Cognition
 - c. Sensory (especially vision and hearing)
 - d. Gait and balance
3. Identify and develop a management plan for conditions that are of major concern amongst the geriatric population, including:
 - a. Mobility problems (including falls)
 - b. Fracture risk
 - c. Dementia
 - d. Delirium
 - e. Depression
 - f. Urinary incontinence
 - g. Malnutrition
 - h. Parkinson's Disease
4. Assess patients presenting with critical illnesses and delirium in acute care.
5. Demonstrate awareness of altered pharmacokinetics when prescribing medications to elderly patients in the acute care setting.

6. Recognize the potential risks associated with the use of prescription and non-prescription medications in the geriatric population and anticipate issues that may arise when elderly patients are admitted to acute care.
7. Review patients' medications, and demonstrate the ability to minimize drug-related problems.
8. Outline the principles of evaluation of pain syndromes, and their pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic management in the context of patient's other comorbidities.
9. Explain the different treatment options that can be used in the management of dementia, and list their potential side effects, as well how to follow response to the medication.
10. Assess driving safety in an older person with physical and cognitive impairments, and explain the legal requirements for reporting to the Ministry of Transportation.

COMMUNICATOR ROLE

1. Demonstrate confidence and the ability to adapt when assessing a geriatric patient, with special emphasis on the aspects of history taking and physical examination that are of particular importance in the elderly population, including techniques of obtaining a history from a person with cognitive impairment and communication disorders.
2. Communicate a new diagnosis of dementia to patients and their caregivers in an effective and compassionate manner, and effectively manage emotional reactions that arise from this.
3. Discuss driving cessation in an effective and compassionate manner.

4. Discuss advance directives and DNR with patients and caregivers using evidence-based materials.
5. Create succinct, legible and comprehensive assessments outlining the key issues, differential diagnoses and plan of action based on the initial contact and evaluation of the patient, while gathering information from collateral sources, (OASIS, caregivers, family physician).
6. Complete discharge summaries on patients under their care, ensuring a smooth transition to community.

COLLABORATOR

1. Explain the role and impact of the family and the caregiver on the care of the older person and be able to effectively recognize and manage problems of the family and the caregiver(s).
2. Attain competence in leading an inter-professional team, including understanding team roles and dynamics, as well as managing team rounds and an appropriate patient case load (with graduated responsibility for up to 8-10 patients).
3. Demonstrate the ability to facilitate a family conference involving multiple family and team members, balancing division of labour and management skills.
4. Observe and understand the role of the team members, including special assessments of the older person by occupational therapy and physiotherapy.

SCHOLAR

1. Demonstrate critical appraisal skills in reviewing medical literature pertinent to the older population.
2. Incorporate strategies to enable life-long learning.
3. Present on a topic pertinent to geriatrics at a geriatric resident teaching session, as well as at Geriatric Academic Rounds.

HEALTH ADVOCATE

1. Recognize the complex ethical issues around the investigation and treatment of various symptoms in the elderly.

2. Facilitate investigations or evaluations as required for the older person.
3. Advocate for supports and appropriate resources for patients under their care (CCAC, Day programs).

MANAGER

Demonstrate appropriate time management skills.

1. Manage and prioritize evaluation of multiple medical problems in the patient.
2. Identify medical issues benefiting from other medical subspecialists to facilitate further investigation and treatment in order to optimize patient function and quality of life.
3. Manage team rounds and family conferences as required.
4. Demonstrate an understanding of admissions criteria and the admissions process for patients coming to the Geriatric Assessment Unit.
5. Outline the process and indications for transitioning patients from the GAU environment to other settings (e.g. restorative care, convalescent care, geriatric rehabilitation).

PROFESSIONAL

1. Recognize and accept your own personal feelings towards the aged and the ageing process and how this impacts on your relationship with the older population.
2. Model for junior learners, behaviour based on respect, empathy and responsibility