

## Hospital Tutors and the Community Day

Throughout Years 3 & 4 students have one day a week set aside for using the Community as a resource for their learning. Reasons for this include:

*Many learning objectives that arise from their Problem-based learning require a community perspective.*

*It provides opportunities to follow the natural history of illness (e.g. seeing post-operative patients after day-case surgery)*

*With less hospital beds, it provides more opportunities to practise clinical skills.*

They are not just learning general practice, but learning and experiencing medicine in a community setting.

The aim is to integrate hospital and community experience to give them an overall view. Think how important this is in dealing with situations such as diabetes, chronic bronchitis, antenatal care, child development, depression, epilepsy or stroke rehabilitation.

It will help students benefit from both hospital and community experience if:

- Hospital tutors discuss with students how to get the best out of their community day. *(e.g. by practising skills, meeting other professionals or seeing certain patients.)*
- Students are not expected to attend any hospital activities on their community day. *(Please remember they may have to travel long distances and practices often need to make arrangements weeks in advance.)*
- However, some flexibility of day should be allowed after negotiation with all concerned. *(It may help you if students are allowed to change day on occasion to attend one of your clinics; this may also help them visit a useful diabetic or antenatal clinic, etc. in the community.)*
- You discuss issues about the interface between hospital and community so that they can see all angles.

## UNDERGRADUATE MEDICAL COURSE

**YEARS 3 and 4**

## THE COMMUNITY DAY

**A guide for Students and Hospital Tutors**

## PBL Groups and the Community Day

The main output of the first group session in problem-based learning is a set of learning tasks. Students are expected to achieve these by personal study and clinical experience.

These tasks should cover a range of clinical knowledge and skills as well as issues of the context and organisation of health care, professional attitudes, ethics and law.

The community (in its widest sense) will provide a good resource for exploration and experience to achieve many of these tasks.

### ***How can a PBL Tutor help students make the best use of this resource and link their experience in the Community with their problem-based learning?***

- Be aware of the wider ramifications of the weekly problems and which aspects might benefit from a Community perspective. *E.g. A case about long-term medication may benefit from understanding how pharmacists work in the community.*
- Make sure students identify learning tasks that they can pursue on the Community day [See "Tutors' Notes for ideas"]
- Encourage students to contact the practices in which they are based to inform them of these tasks. This should be done as soon as possible so that practices can arrange experience.
- Remember that the practices are bases but the whole local community is open to the adventurous student.  
*They might visit a Community paediatrician, a residential home for the mentally ill or a workplace during the day.*
- Encourage them to discuss their Community experiences at the feedback session.
- Consider a meeting with GP and Hospital Tutors to discuss areas of concern.

## Students and the Community Day

Many objectives in your undergraduate course require you to think widely about health, disease and the doctor's role. For instance you need to know:

*"The range of problems that are presented to doctors."*

*"The environmental and social determinants of disease."*

*"The principles of disease prevention and health promotion".*

*"Human relationships, individual and community."*

You will be expected to be able to:

*"Communicate with and inform patients, relatives and carers about disease process"*

and to have acquired a range of professional attitudes including:

*"Ability to cope with uncertainty" and "willingness ... to contribute to community ... welfare."*

The community day gives an opportunity to address these, as well as to develop your clinical knowledge and practice your clinical skills. You should find that PBL groups stimulate you to think about these issues.

To make the best use of your Community Day you should:

- Make sure your group defines learning objectives and tasks that can be achieved during that day.
- Inform your base practice well in advance of what your personal objectives and tasks are and what experience might be helpful.
- Remember that the Community Day is protected time: you should not have ANY hospital commitments on that day.
- Remember the whole local community should be available to you, not just the practice.
- Plan what questions you have for doctors, other staff and patients.
- Practise talking to patients and examining them as much as you can.
- Think divergently: The problem may be *"Aortic aneurysm"* but you could consider risk factors, elderly screening, consent or bereavement.
- Share your experience with your group at the feedback session.