Characteristics of Clinical Teachers Valued by Pre-Clinical Medical Students
Karen Szauter & Oma Morey
University of Texas Medical Branch, Galveston TX

BACKGROUND
Many studies describe the benefits of early clinical experiences on medical student learning (1)
- Motivates students to study
- Creates understanding of impact of illness on patient's lives
- Promotes professional socialization
- Stimulates memory processes & reasoning skills

Most studies analyzing student evaluations of clinical teachers come from upper level students or graduate medical trainees (2)

Best practices for teachers of pre-clinical students in the clinical setting are not well described

STUDY QUESTION
Which characteristics of clinical teachers are most highly valued by pre-clinical students?
Do these differ from characteristics identified by more advanced learners?

METHODS
Data source:
General Internal Medicine Statewide Preceptorship Program (GIMSPP)
- Four-week clinical immersion with a practicing physician (volunteer) within the state of Texas
- Students participate between Year 1 & Year 2 (preclinical period) of medical school training

GIMSPP administration/support provided by Texas Chapter of the American College of Physicians
- Permission for study obtained from the TX-ACP Board of Directors; IRB approval obtained from home institution

Students are required to complete an evaluation of the GIMSPP at the end of the experience
Evaluation includes questions specific to the preceptor
- Provide examples of preceptor strengths (up to 3)
- Provide examples of areas for improvement (up to 3)
Final question (open ended) ask for "additional comments about the experience"

Qualitative study – content analysis
All identifiers removed
Themes identified and used for groupings

RESULTS
Evaluations reviewed from participants completing rotations between 2006 - 2012
- Comments from 720 students analyzed
- Total of 2422 attributes coded

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Areas for Improvement</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N = 2010</td>
<td>N = 412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal character</td>
<td>(40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching skills</td>
<td>(31%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patient care</td>
<td>(13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>(14%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning environment</td>
<td>(1%)</td>
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Open ended comments: 291 (71%) included a statement directly related to the preceptor

DISCUSSION
Huggert and colleagues studied second year medical student perceptions of preceptor quality through review of student learning journals.(3)

Highlighted features of preceptors included:
- (1) Demonstrates professional expertise
- (2) Actively engages students in learning
- (3) Creates a positive environment for teaching and learning
- (4) Demonstrates collegiality and professionalism
- (5) Discusses career-related topics and concerns

Our work shows a different priority of valued attributes and adds a dimension to what is known in this area by:
- gathering data on preceptors generally unknown to the students prior to the rotation
- specifically asking students for descriptors of preceptor strengths and areas for improvement
- sampling a large student population from multiple institutions over several years

Work in this area has implications for faculty development in both academic health centers and community based practices. Optimal preparation of preceptors is essential as we transition curricula to include more early exposure in the clinical setting.

REFERENCES