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## Reciprocal relationship between identities as physicians and teachers in an integrated undergraduate medical curriculum

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### ➤ Disclosure

- We have no conflicts of interest
- This study was determined to be exempt from MSU IRB



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## ➤ Background

- New curriculum adopted in 2016
- Guiding principles:
  - Enhancing clinical relevance of basic and social sciences from the very beginning of medical school
  - Role of clinician educators in the pre-clerkship curriculum now more central



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## ➤ Background

- Clinician educators' roles as physicians are highly valued
- Clinicians' identities as teachers tend to be less supported

(Steinert, O'Sullivan, and Irby, 2019)



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## ➤ Our Study

- Research Focus

- Describe how clinician educators' dual identities as physicians and teachers influence each other



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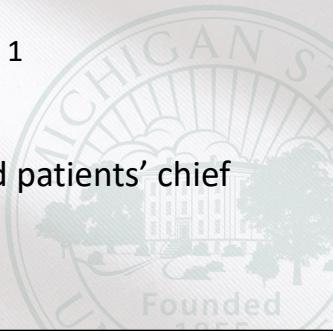
## ➤ Method

- New curriculum

- Clinician educators lead 2-hour small group sessions
  - 7 to 9 students per group:
    - Meet twice weekly during Year 1
    - Meet once per week in Year 2
  - Curriculum integrated around patients' chief complaints and concerns.



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## ➤ Participants

- Sent out invitation in summer 2018
- 20 out of 36 (56%) clinician educators agreed to participate in the study
  - 12 male, 8 female
  - Various specialties
  - Practicing medicine for at least eight years



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## ➤ Data Collection and Analysis

- 45-minute semi-structured interview focusing on participants' experience as a physician-educator
- Two major themes
  - Influence of patient care on teaching
  - Influence of teaching on patient care



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## ➤ Data Collection and Analysis

- Conventional content analysis (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005)
- Two researchers independently coded the data
  - reached an inter-rater reliability of 80%



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## ➤ Influence of Patient Care on Teaching

- Bringing clinical experience into teaching
  - Bring in real-life experiences that cannot be learned from textbooks
  - Makes teaching more “dynamic” and “exciting” for students
  - Helps students “see how something they’re doing today relates to their future”



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## ➤ Influence of Patient Care on Teaching

- Improving communication skills
  - Physician-patient communication skills could affect their questioning skills in classrooms
  - *“tell me how the symptoms started”*, *“describe it for me”*... **The same thing is true in teaching.** You can just sort of elegantly move them around, or if it's not working at all you can just take over.



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## ➤ Influence of Patient Care on Teaching

- Relationship building
  - “My patients teach me every day...It's a reciprocal relationship where we learn from each other...**It's the same as the students...**It's a group learning experience. I can't impart the group learning to them. **I can just help them figure out how to learn it.”**



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## ➤ Influence of Teaching on Patient Care

- Refreshing career energy
  - “It revitalizes me to the point where it’s harder to get burned out from medicine when you’re teaching students.”
  - “Getting re-energized about the future of medicine...It kind of gives me renewed faith – not only where our college is at, but also where the future of healthcare and medicine is.”
  - “It helps me to maintain a fresh and enthusiastic perspective.”



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## ➤ Influence of Teaching on Patient Care

- Providing personal satisfaction
  - “the personal satisfaction of watching a young doctor become a doctor, and knowing that I had something to do with teaching them how to become a professional doctor.”



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## ➤ Influence of Teaching on Patient Care

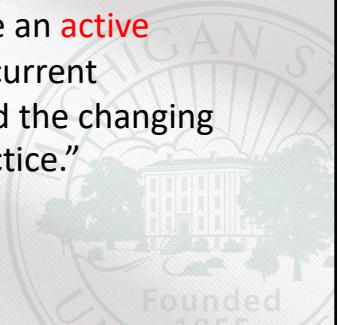
- Improving communication skills
  - “by emphasizing to students what they need to do, it **reinforces some of my interactional skills and physical exam skills that I use with my own patients.**”
  - “teaching allows me to **become a better communicator** on a daily basis.”



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## ➤ Influence of Teaching on Patient Care

- Life long learning
  - “It keeps me **up to date**....Just plain clinical practice wouldn’t get me there.”
  - “An active teacher makes me an **active learner**. So I stay up on the current advances in medical care and the changing environment of medical practice.”



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## ➤ Dual Identities Reinforce Each Other

- Two identities – physicians and teachers – were intertwined
  - “My role as a physician is as a teacher.”
  - “**Physicians by definition are teachers.** You have to teach to be a physician of any kind, to some extent.”
  - “For myself **the blend** [being both a physician and teacher] is **what brings me the most personal satisfaction and fulfillment.**”

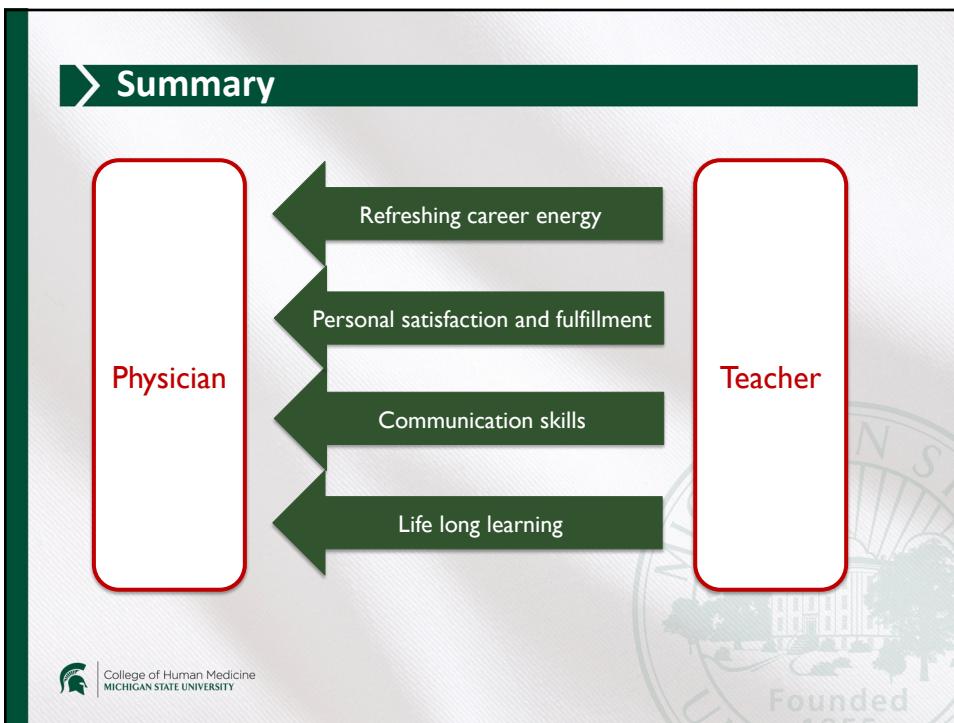


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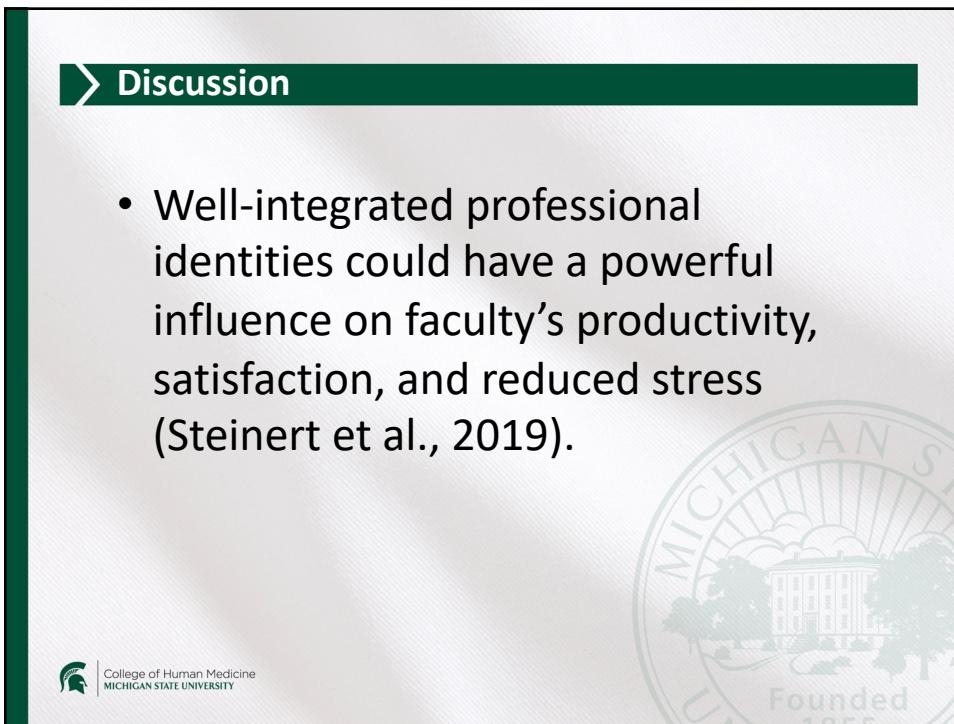
## ➤ Summary



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## ➤ Discussion

- For clinician educators who are more of “bystanders” (Stalburg, 2019):
  - realizing the intertwinement between physician and teaching could help them develop a deeper understanding of inseparable connections between their dual roles.



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## ➤ Discussion

- Faculty development to strengthen faculty members' professional identities
  - Transferability of knowledge and skills
  - Reciprocal reinforcement between dual identities



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## ➤ Discussion

- Institutional support

- “Doctor as a teacher has not been recognized sufficiently compared with the clinician and research worker” (Harden & Lilley, 2018)
- Provide more institutional support (e.g., incentives, reappointment and promotion criteria) for teaching



## ➤ References

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# THANK YOU

## Questions?



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