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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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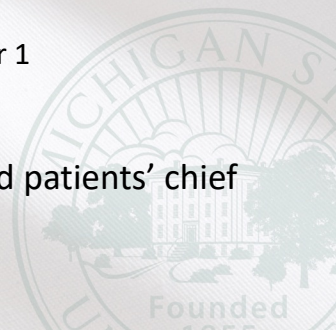
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> Method

- 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

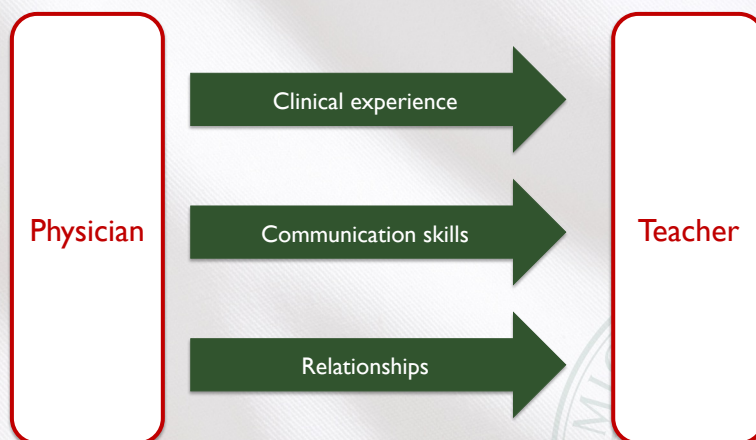
- Two identities – physicians and teachers – were intertwined
 - “My role as a physician is as a teacher.”
 - “Physicians by definition are teachers. You have to teach to be a physician of any kind, to some extent.”
 - “For myself the blend [being both a physician and teacher] is what brings me the most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



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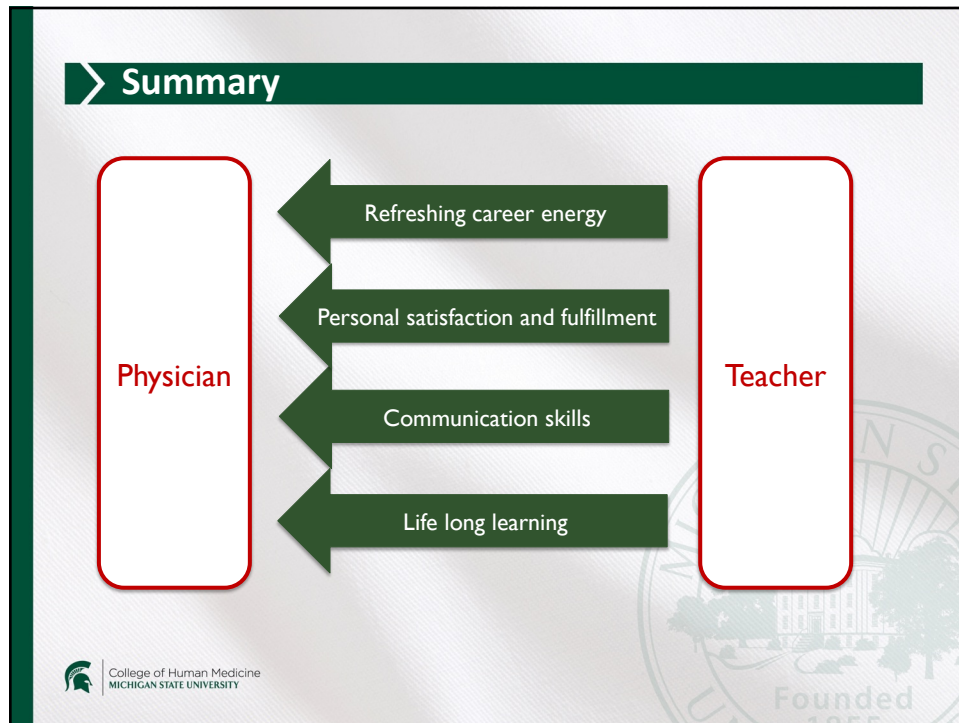
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> Summary



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Discussion

- Well-integrated professional identities could have a powerful influence on faculty's productivity, satisfaction, and reduced stress (Steinert et al., 2019).

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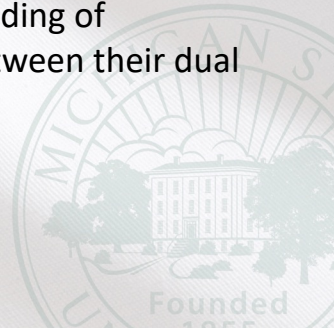
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Discussion

- 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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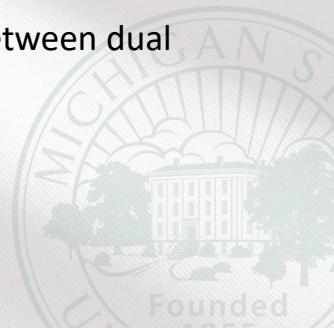
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Discussion

- 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



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