Overview

Care of the Older Adult adapts the concepts from prior coursework to the care of older adults. An understanding of the effects that policy and legislation have on how healthcare systems treat aging patients sets a foundation for improving their care. Students will apply health assessment skills and evidence-based standards in such a way to account for the specific needs of older adults. Emphasis is placed on the importance of maintaining the dignity of older adults by focusing on cultural, religious, spiritual, and communication needs, and by collaborating on care with older adults, families, and caregivers.

Competencies

- **Compassionate and Respectful Care of Older Adults**
  The graduate integrates principles of compassion and respect for patients and their families into the planning and delivery of care to a diverse population of older adults and into advocacy for vulnerable older adults.

- **Health Promotion/Maintenance and Living Environments of Older Adults**
  The graduate evaluates the older adults' lifeworld with special awareness of the diversity among the health status of older adults, individualizing care according to the physical, mental/cognitive, functional, and psychosocial well-being of an elder patient, along with support systems in place.

- **Health Needs of Older Adults**
  The graduate effectively collaborates with patients, families, and interprofessional team members in planning primary, secondary, tertiary, and end-of-life care that addresses older adults' physical, mental, psychosocial, and spiritual needs and preferences, and responses to changes in health status and related treatments.

- **Promoting Independence and Autonomy While Reducing Risk Factors in Older Adults**
  The graduate recommends techniques to cocreate health and illness management practices with older adults and their families (caregivers) that ensure safety and optimal maintenance of functional ability, taking into account patient characteristics and needs and patient and caregiver vulnerabilities as well as strengths.
Promoting Health and Independence in Older Adults

Technology-Assisted Care of Older Adults
The graduate collaborates with patients, families, and the interprofessional team to select the appropriate application of technology to enhance older adults' safety and independence.

Healthcare Systems and Health Policy
The graduate evaluates the effectiveness of the healthcare environment and the influence of health policy in providing care that maximizes the function and independence of older adults in accordance with individual patient characteristics and patient and family needs.

Care Transition
The graduate determines the needs of older adults and their families and caregivers to coordinating patient-centered, safe transitions of care that aim to assure the least-restrictive care environment relative to strengths and vulnerabilities, and reduce unnecessary hospitalizations.

Palliative and End-of-life Care
The graduate collaborates with patients and families to support palliative care needs in order to reduce symptom burden and treatment fatigue and enhance quality of life, as well as end-of-life care that is compassionate, respectful, patient centered, and family supported.

Genomics in Adult Care
The graduate plans and provides patient care that incorporates genomic influences and risks, and provides patient education that recognizes individual attitudes and values.

Learning

Getting Started
Welcome to Care of the Older Adult! Healthcare is dealing with an increased life expectancy and healthcare professionals in all practice settings should be prepared to care for older adults. When you are ready to begin the course, select the “Go to Course Material” button to access the course content and learning resources. Each course topic will be included via the course’s learning platform. A pacing guide is provided as a suggestion for weekly goals and time management. Your course instructor will inform you how best to schedule time for reading and coursework, help you prepare for the pre-assessment, and provide feedback on your progress. Frequent communication with your program mentor will help you succeed. Competency will be demonstrated by the successful completion of an objective assessment.
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Course Instructor Responsibility
How to Work with Course Instructors