A curriculum to help hematology/oncology fellows succeed in research

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OBJECTIVE
Design a curriculum for adult hematology/oncology fellows that will help them transition from clinical to research studies.

BACKGROUND
Training to be an adult medical oncologist or hematologist is a long, involved process beginning with four years of medical school, followed by three years of residency, then one to two years of clinical subspecialty training. At the end of subspecialty clinical training, the trainee is expected to pursue a research project for one or more years. During the initial 8-9 year educational period, there is virtually no research training resulting in most clinicians arriving to the research part of their careers with no background. Yet, for trainees to obtain value from their research experiences, and just as importantly, for the research to provide value to the medical community, these trainees need to rapidly acquire an understanding of the research structure within which they will need to work. A number of programs have been developed to solve this problem. For example, the Clinical Effectiveness course at Harvard Medical School is a summer long course that can be expanded into a degree program to teach clinical epidemiology and trial design. Alternatively, the annual workshop by the AACR and ASCO at Vail is a week-long intense workshop for teaching clinical trial design. While these courses are excellent, only a limited number of people can participate. My goal was to design a focused program that would give fellows the basic tools to identify a mentor, think about a research project and navigate a focused program that would give fellows the basic tools to identify a mentor, think about a research project and navigate a focused program that would give fellows the basic tools to identify a mentor, think about a research project and navigate another body of text that will repeat over and until it fills up the page. It requires little thought but says a great deal about layout design for the purpose of this discussion.

METHOD
1. Interviewed fellows: currently, there are 23 fellows in the Yale hematology/oncology program, of whom 15 have completed

THE PLAN

OUTCOME MEASURES
The outcomes below will be measured both pre and post-implementation of the curriculum:

1. Percentage of fellows with a defined project at the start of second year fellowship.
2. Percentage of fellows who do not change mentors after first year fellowship.
3. Number of fellows’ publications.
4. Number and type of fellows’ grant funding.
5. Types of careers fellows pursue after fellowship (e.g. academic vs private practice). research track vs clinical educator track).
6. Though qualitative, I will discuss with future fellows their views of the mentorship and research process.

CONCLUSIONS
There is a clear need for better methods of transitioning clinicians in subspecialty training into researchers. In piloting this curriculum for the Yale hematology/oncology fellows, I hope to ease the transition both to improve the fellowship experience and to foster more researchers in the field.

REFERENCES
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