The Dean's Corner

Givers and Healers

There are a host of reasons why a medical student should not take eight weeks out of those last precious forty-eight of the senior year to travel to exotic places to learn medicine. The vast technology of modern medicine cannot be learned in those places. There are personal risks involved. Airplane hijackings, random acts of terrorism, unstable governments, exposure to unusual diseases to which our pampered immune systems have not yet built defenses, all these reasons and more would argue against such choices. And yet they go.

A substantial number of our medical students have taken such electives. They do so even though they know that the same eight weeks spent in an elective rotation in an American medical center might enhance their chances for residency training in that place; competition for prestige residencies is fierce and getting more so. Why don't they all go to Sweden, which has none of the risks listed above and which has one of the best systems of medical care in the world, although it is substantially different from ours?

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In January, one of our medical students chose to go to Zimbabwe to work in a medical mission station. While there, he died. We will never know whether the disease that caused his death began before or after he arrived in Africa. It doesn't really matter. Larry Mayes knew quite well that there were risks involved, just as he knew, as other student travelers know, that any contribution he might make to alleviate the pain and suffering of a few human beings in Zimbabwe would, in the broader context of the Third World, be like a drop of water falling on a raging bonfire. Countries where malnutrition, illiteracy, massive poverty, and social disruption are the norm respond little to the ministrations of a few well-meaning outsiders no matter how strong their dedication. Yet he and others still choose to go.

The increasing technology of medicine tends to force us as practitioners into narrower and narrower roles. The specialties split into narrower subspecialties. Radiologists must choose between diagnostic versus therapeutic radiology. The ophthalmologists of the future must focus either on the lens, the cornea, or the retina for their surgical work. External constraints on practitioners can be equally confining. Regulation and surveillance of each physician's practice becomes more pervasive year by year. Both the growth of technology and the growth of external accountability can be perceived by students as an array of cells from which they must choose one or two in which to channel their future careers. Having marched to the drummer of good grades and good scores for eighteen years, senior medical students must make those complex choices that will tie them to another place, another hospital, another group of teachers for another three to six years.

Perhaps these are some of the reasons that students choose to go, however briefly, to dangerous and exotic places to practice their new skills, to go where licenses and certifications are not so important and to give where their only reward can be read in the eyes of the patients.

We are best defined not by diplomas or certificates, but by what we do. I hope our students will continue to make these choices, to define themselves as givers and as healers. I believe Larry Mayes would like that.

W.J.C.
On January 26, senior medical student Larry R. Mayes died of viral encephalitis and lobar pneumonia while doing his community medicine rotation at the Old Mutare Mission Hospital in Zimbabwe, Africa. Doctors were unable to determine whether he had contracted encephalitis before or after he left to go abroad on January 10; he was to have returned on March 10.

When he became gravely ill on January 22, his mother, Mrs. Jack Mayes; his fiancée, Amy Zechella, a 1983 graduate of the Capstone College of Nursing and a nurse at DCH Regional Medical Center; his brother-in-law, Steve Danford; and Dr. Terry Olivet, Clinical Associate Professor of Surgery, flew to Africa and were with him when he died.

Larry would have graduated from the University of Alabama School of Medicine on May 18 and planned to be married on May 31. He had done a rotation at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, and hoped to be accepted into a residency program there. He was twenty-six years old.

A native of Tuscaloosa, Alabama, Larry was a 1979 graduate of Tuscaloosa High School and a 1981 graduate of the University of Alabama. He was an active member of Forest Lake United Methodist Church, which, along with Reader's Digest International and the Caduceus Club of Birmingham, sponsored his trip to Africa.

In accordance with his family's wishes, the Larry Mayes Fund has been established within the Lister Hill Society of the College of Community Health Sciences. Donations will be placed in an interest-bearing account, and the interest will be used for an annual scholarship award to a rising senior from the Tuscaloosa campus for study abroad.

The scholarship selection committee will be composed of two physicians from the Tuscaloosa community, the associate dean for academic affairs, the director of medical student affairs, the president of the medical student body on the Tuscaloosa campus, and a member of the Mayes family.

The award will be given on the basis of grade point average, class rank, and an essay on why the student wishes to study abroad and what the student hopes to gain from the experience.

Inquiries should be directed to the College of Community Health Sciences Office of Medical Student Affairs. Donations may be sent to the Lister Hill Society, College of Community Health Sciences, P.O. Box 6291, University, Alabama 35486.
The University of Alabama was the first major university to announce publicly that it had developed a drug testing program and the policies to govern it. According to Athletic Director Ray Perkins, the university's program is designed to be educational and supportive in approach rather than punitive.

When the drug screening program was being initiated over a year ago, Dr. William deShazo, Professor of Family Medicine and Team Physician, surveyed a diverse cross-section of the community to determine attitudes about drug abuse and the effects of drug screening in athletic programs. A paper based on this survey, with Dr. Samuel Gaskins, Associate Professor of Family Medicine and Director of the Family Practice Residency Program, as the principal author, was published in the August 1985 issue of The Physician and Sportsmedicine (13:93-100).

A total of 104 individuals were interviewed: 33 student athletes participating in the university's athletic program (22 men and 11 women), 20 nonathlete university students, 13 high school athletes, 10 parents of athletes, 10 alumni, 8 coaches (5 university and 3 high school), 6 faculty members, and 4 former student athletes.

Over 90% of the nonstudent group believed that drug abuse was a significant problem for college students and student athletes in general. Smaller percentages of this group believed that drug abuse was a problem at UA. In contrast, for the combined student group (UA students and student athletes), there was significantly less recognition of drug abuse as a problem among all college students, college athletes, UA students, and UA athletes. Less than half of the student group felt that drug abuse was a problem for either college athletes, UA students, or UA athletes.

However, the nonstudent group and the UA student group agreed that drug abuse among athletes should be of concern to college administrators (100% and 90%, respectively). These two groups also agreed that drug use was not acceptable at social events.

High school athletes generally agreed with the older nonstudents that drug abuse was a problem among college students, but did not think it was a problem among UA athletes. The high school athletes disagreed strongly with both the UA student population and the older nonstudent population about whether drug abuse among athletes should be a concern of college administrators and whether occasional use of drugs at social events was acceptable.

In other areas, the high school athletes generally agreed with the UA athletes. Exceptions were that they felt strongly that the Southeastern Conference should have a uniform policy and that a screening policy would not cause potential athletes to go to other schools. On the other hand, of all groups, high school athletes felt most strongly that drug screening was an invasion of privacy and that it treated the athletes as if they were immature.

All groups agreed that screening should be conducted for all sports and not just for football and basketball nor for men only. There was also general agreement that a screening policy should include counseling for first offenders and specific penalties for repeat offenders.

There were a few questions that only the UA athletes were asked. All agreed that an athlete should be informed that a drug screening program exists at a school before signing an athletic scholarship. Although 64% agreed that screening could cause potential athletes to attend other schools, 82% said they would not have had second thoughts about accepting a scholarship at UA if they had known about the screening program in advance.

This past fall, after one year of experience with the drug screening program, the Crimson White, the university's student newspaper, ran a three-part series that included interviews with Drs. Gaskins and deShazo, athletes, students, and athletic department staff. Despite apprehensions when the program was initiated that it could be seen as an invasion of the athletes' privacy, that it implied that the university had a drug problem, and that it might hurt recruiting, it is now regarded by all groups interviewed as positive and helpful. Some younger athletes even mentioned it as an important factor in their decision to sign with the University of Alabama.
Courtesies and Negotiation in the Physician/Patient Relationship

In an effort to test methods to improve the teaching of physician/patient interaction in the family practice suites at the Capstone Medical Center, Dr. Bradley Ware, Assistant Professor of Family Medicine and Community Medicine, Dr. Harriet Myers, Assistant Professor of Clinical Psychology, and Lee Badger, Coordinator of Research for the Department of Psychiatry, developed a project, funded by the CCHS Research Grants Program, to investigate the effectiveness of using short workshops to teach interview "courtesies" and a negotiation process to family practice residents. Assisting with the project were Mary Fish Rogers, Research Assistant with the Department of Family Medicine, Mary Flynn, a graduate student in the psychology department, and Spencer Coleman, junior medical student at UASOM, Tuscaloosa, who was here then as a summer research fellow.

The project involved videotaping residents in their first encounters with new adult patients. After all participating residents had been videotaped, they attended three one and a half hour workshops on the use of negotiation. The sessions included lecture/discussion, role-playing, and practice in being videotaped. After the training component, residents were videotaped again while seeing additional new patients. All first-year residents were asked to participate, but a few refused because of a reluctance to be videotaped.

The idea behind the negotiation approach is that, once the clinician has gathered assessment data and formulated a working diagnosis, the clinician and patient will work together to define the problems and to determine the whys and hows of specific treatment regimens. This approach departs from the traditional, more authoritarian physician behavior and presumes some patient interest in and responsibility for her/his own health and health behaviors.

Since the negotiation would occur toward the end of the visit, the investigators included in the workshops some specific behaviors or "courtesies" to be used in three stages in initiating the visit and setting the tone: (1) preinterview, knocking before entering the exam room; (2) initial contact with the patient, greeting the patient by name and expressing concern for the patient's comfort; and (3) the transition from the initial social dialo with the patient to the clinical problem. The effectiveness of the workshops was measured by rating the use of negotiation in the post-workshop videotaped patient visits, by patient satisfaction ratings and physician satisfaction ratings immediately after the visits, and by patient compliance with the treatment plan.

Examination of the post-workshop videotapes revealed little evidence of increased utilization of the negotiated approach on the part of the residents. However, the patients showed increased negotiation behaviors involving increased discussion of, agreement with, and understanding of the treatment plan. This discrepancy appears to have been directly related to the residents' use of the interview initiation behaviors, the courtesies, that were also taught during the workshops.

Two preliminary conclusions can be drawn from this study: (1) While short-term workshops may not be effective in changing the complex interaction between doctor and patient required by the negotiation process, the workshops are effective in teaching the specific, concrete initiation behaviors, the courtesies. (2) Patient satisfaction is directly related to the use of these courtesies.

In summary, training was most successful when it was behaviorally specific, and resident training in the courtesies resulted in increased patient participation in treatment planning and in greater patient satisfaction.

News Briefs

Appointments, Honors, and Awards

Dr. Lorin BAUMHOVER, Professor of Behavioral Science and Director of the Center for the Study of Aging, has been invited to be guest editor for the spring issue of the journal Educational Gerontology: An International Quarterly.

Sarah DEMELLIER, Coordinator of Sponsored Programs and External Affairs, has been elected president of the board of directors of Hospice of West Alabama.
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Dr. William DRESSLER, Associate Professor of Behavioral Science, has been nominated for the National Science Foundation's Alan T. Waterman Award by Dr. Fernando E. Viteri, Division of Food and Nutrition, Pan American Health Organization.

Dr. Robert J. HOGUE, from Gainesville, Florida, has been appointed Clinical Assistant Professor of Surgery (Plastic Surgery); Dr. Eugene A. MANGIERI has been appointed Clinical Assistant Professor of Surgery (Anesthesiology).

Dr. Mary Joyce MCGINNIS, Assistant Professor of Obstetrics/Gynecology, has received certification as a diplomate of the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology.

Presentations and Publications

On December 12, 1985, Dr. Lorin BAUMHOVER, Professor of Behavioral Science and Director of the Center for the Study of Aging, served as forum leader for "Health Promotion for Older Adults: Planning for Action," a live national teleconference sponsored by the American Hospital Association and held at DCH Regional Medical Center.

Dr. Wilmer COGGINS, Dean, presented "Clinical Case Approach in CME: Overview of the Methodology" at the Medical Association of the State of Alabama CME Officials Meeting in Montgomery, Alabama, on January 8. Dr. Alan MAXWELL, Clinical Associate Professor of Family Medicine, participated in presenting "The Clinical Team Approach in Treating Mental Patients" at the same meeting.


Dr. William R. SHAMBLIN, Associate Professor of Surgery, and his brother James R. Shamblin presented "Vertical Gastroplasty for Morbid Obesity" at the American College of Surgeons meeting in Chicago, Illinois, October 13-18, 1985, and "Gastroplasty for Morbid Obesity" at the Southern Medical Association meeting in Orlando, Florida, November 17-20, 1985.

Grant and Contract Activities

Dr. Lorin BAUMHOVER, Professor of Behavioral Science and Director of the Center for the Study of Aging, submitted the application "Projecting Need for LTC Services: A Computer Model" to the National Center for Health Services Research for the February 1 deadline. The proposal requests $109,916 over three years; it was jointly developed with the Institute for Social Science Research.

Margaret GARNER, Assistant Professor and Clinical Nutritionist, Department of Family Medicine, submitted the application "Food Selection, Nutrient Intakes, and Growth of High Risk Infants" to the University of Alabama Research Grants Committee for the February 14 deadline; the proposal requests $1,600.

Dr. Mary Joyce MCGINNIS, Assistant Professor of Obstetrics/Gynecology, has submitted an application to the CCHS Research Grants Program to computerize previously collected data on over 300 patients at high risk for genital neoplasia.

Meetings, Workshops, Consultations

Dr. Russell ANDERSON, Associate Professor and Chief of Family Medicine, consulted for the Residency Assistance Program at Scott Air Force Base in Illinois, January 27-29, 1986.

Dr. Lorin BAUMHOVER, Professor of Behavioral Science and Director of the Center for the Study of Aging, consulted with the Mississippi Council on Aging on the community-based long-term care project.

Dr. Marcia CHESEBRO, Assistant Professor of Family Medicine, attended the Duke-Watts Family Medicine Faculty Development Workshop Series "Small Group and Lecture Skills" in Durham, North Carolina, January 12-15, 1986.
Shirley CULP, Assistant to the Dean, Shirley FLORENCE, Staff Assistant in the Office of Education, and Bernice PRICE, Manager of Budgets and Accounting, attended the Fifteenth Women in Management Conference at the University of Alabama, October 23-25, 1985.

Dr. William DRESSLER, Associate Professor of Behavioral Science, was an invited consultant at the International Seminar on Community-Based Longitudinal Studies of Health, which was organized by the Medical Research Council Sociology Unit-Glasgow and was held at Culcreuch Castle, Scotland, January 13-17, 1986. Dr. Dressler attended a seminar of participants in PRECAVAS (Prevention of Cardiovascular Disease in Developing Countries) research in Washington, D.C., December 16-20, 1985. The seminar was sponsored by the Pan American Health Organization.

Margaret GARNER, Assistant Professor and Clinical Nutritionist, Department of Family Medicine, made a site visit to Muncie, Indiana, for the American Dietetic Association, January 21-24, 1986.

Dr. Robert PIERONI, Professor of Internal Medicine and Family Medicine, as a deputy examiner of the Alabama Board of Medical Examiners, conducted oral examinations of candidates for Alabama licensure in Montgomery on December 7, 1985.

Barbara SELF, Business Office Manager, and Jeanne LONG, Data Control Supervisor, attended a workshop sponsored by the Medical Group Management Association on "Better Medical Managers Through Education" in Montgomery, Alabama, on February 12, 1986.


Dr. William SIMPSON, Clinical Associate Professor and Chief of Surgery, attended the American College of Chest Physicians meeting in New Orleans, Louisiana, October 27-31, 1985.

George TULLI, CMC Administrator, and Jill STEWART, Medical Group Practice Coordinator, hosted a meeting of the Association of Clinic Managers for University Family Practice Centers at the CMC on January 17, 1986.

Community Service

Interviews with Dr. Robert PIERONI, Professor of Internal Medicine and Family Medicine, were published in the Tuscaloosa News on December 22, 1985, on "Vaccine Development" and on January 26, 1986, on "The Older Population is Growing." He also appeared on Newscenter 17 (Tuscaloosa) in December discussing "AIDS" and "Current Immunization Practices." Dr. Pieroni was stationed at the 345th Combat Support Hospital in Dinkelsbuhl, Federal Republic of Germany, from January 12 to February 1, 1986, as one of a team of physicians supporting 70,000 participants in the 1986 Re hacker (Return Forces to Germany).

Arrivals and Departures

Dr. Joe BURLESON retired as Director of Surgical Education for the Department of Surgery on December 31, 1985.

Pamela LEE resigned her position as L.P.N. in the Family Medicine Red Suite and has been replaced by Cheryl STRICKLAND.

Dr. Christine NAGY has joined the Department of Community Medicine as a Research Associate for the Ford Foundation project.

Dr. Mary SAWYER has joined the full-time faculty as an Assistant Professor of Pediatrics.

Vital Statistics

James BAILEY, Graduate Research Assistant in the Department of Community Medicine, married Sharon Spence in Florence, Alabama, December 28, 1985.

College faculty and staff extend their sympathy to Susan COPELAND, Ob/Gyn Suite L.P.N. Charge Nurse, on the death of her father.

Jennifer Leigh Lyons, birthweight 8 lbs. 3 oz., was born to Timothy and SANDRA LYONS,
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Medical Receptionist in the Family Medicine Blue Suite, on January 30, 1986.

Lanna MOON, Insurance Clerk, married Richard Hennings on December 14, 1985.

Lisa OVERTON, Medical Records Clerk, married Kenneth Mills on February 15, 1986.

Meghan Heather Whalen was born to Barb and TIM WHALEN, a 1978 graduate of UASOM, Tuscaloosa, on November 12, 1985. Dr. Whalen is completing his Navy commitment in Poway, California, and plans to return to Alabama, "probably Tuscaloosa," to practice.

Miscellany

Dr. James LEEPER, Associate Professor of Community Medicine and Chair of the CCHS Research Committee, has announced that nominations for Student and Resident Research Awards are due April 1. Each award consists of a plaque and a check. Students and residents interested in applying and faculty wishing to submit nominations should contact Dr. Leeper for additional guidelines.

Much of the information reported below on the class of 1983 was provided by Dr. Greg SMITH, himself a 1983 graduate of UASOM, Tuscaloosa. Dr. Smith resigned from his Air Force surgery residency program on July 1, 1985, and is currently a flight surgeon at Castle Air Force Base in California. He plans to begin a radiology residency on July 1, 1986, at Travis Air Force Base in California.

Dr. Jon KENTROS, a 1983 graduate of UASOM, Tuscaloosa, is chief resident in anesthesiology at the University of Texas, Houston. He is going to do a six-month fellowship in neurological anesthesiology at Guy's Hospital in London beginning July 1, 1986; then he will do a six-month fellowship in cardiovascular anesthesiology in Birmingham. Dr. Donna KENTROS, also a 1983 graduate of UASOM, Tuscaloosa, plans to begin a pediatrics practice in Birmingham in January 1987.

Dr. Susan OLIVER, a 1983 graduate of UASOM, Tuscaloosa, will complete her anesthesiology residency at the Mayo Graduate Medical School in July 1986 and will then begin a fellowship in neurosurgical anesthesiology there. Dr. William OLIVER, a 1983 graduate of UASOM, Tuscaloosa, will also complete his anesthesiology residency at the Mayo Graduate Medical School in July 1986 and will begin a fellowship there in cardiovascular anesthesiology.

Dr. Larry WOMACK, a 1976 graduate of UASOM, Tuscaloosa, has been practicing ophthalmology in Sioux City, Iowa, for two years, but he plans to return to Minnesota this coming summer to enter a group practice in Bemidji, where he used to live.

College Calendar

March 7
First Friday Letters, Science, and Medicine Conference. "Mount Saint Helens: Dynamics of Disaster, May 18, 1980," Dr. Gary Hooks, Professor of Geology. Room 101 Educational Tower, DCH Regional Medical Center, 12:30 p.m.

March 18
Grand Rounds, "Common Allergies and Allergy Immunotherapy," Oak Room, DCH Regional Medical Center, 8:00 a.m.; Noon Conference, "Urticaria and Angioedema," 101 Educational Tower, DCH Regional Medical Center, 12:30 p.m. Dr. James R. Bonner, Associate Professor of Medicine, Division of Infectious Diseases, UASOM.

March 19
General Faculty Meeting, Carrel Room, Capstone Medical Center, 12 noon.

March 21
Current Research at CCHS. "Research on Premenstrual Syndrome," Dr. Paul Mozley, Professor and Chairman of Obstetrics and Gynecology. Room 101 Educational Tower, DCH Regional Medical Center, 12:30 p.m.

March 25
"Injuries to the Upper Extremity: Family Physician's Approach," Dr. James Hill, Chicago, Illinois. Room 101 Educational Tower, DCH Regional Medical Center, 12:30 p.m.

April 4
First Friday Letters, Science, and Medicine
Conference. "Effects of the Tenn-Tom Waterway on Fishes," Dr. Herbert Boschung, Professor of Biology. Room 101 Educational Tower, DCH Regional Medical Center, 12:30 p.m.

April 9
General Faculty Meeting, Carrel Room, Capstone Medical Center, 12 noon.

April 11
Current Research at CCHS. Room 101 Educational Tower, DCH Regional Medical Center, 12:30 p.m.

April 15
Grand Rounds, "Overview and Update of Antibiotics," Oak Room, DCH Regional Medical Center, 8:00 a.m.; Noon Conference, "AIDS," 101 Educational Tower, DCH Regional Medical Center, 12:30 p.m. Dr. William E. Dismukes, Professor of Medicine, Division of Infectious Diseases, UASOM.

May 10
The Lampoon, the residents' annual appreciation night and party. For information, call (205) 348-1373.

May 17
Honors Convocation for graduating seniors, with reception following. North River Yacht Club, 5:30 p.m. The distinguished guest speaker will be Dr. John Stone of Emory University. A special invitation is issued to all alumni of UASOM, Tuscaloosa, to attend on this tenth anniversary of the college's first graduating class.