

Brown Students at the Bedside: implementation and evaluation of a pilot volunteer program to improve social support in the inpatient setting

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BACKGROUND

- Brown Students at the Bedside is a pilot program to pair medical student volunteers with hospitalized patients to address loneliness and lack of social support in the inpatient setting.
- The medical team identifies a patient who they feel would benefit from additional social support and requests the Brown Students at the bedside service.

PURPOSE

- **Brown Students at the Bedside is meant to:**
 - 1) Provide companionship to patients with limited social support via 1:1 visits
 - 2) Offer early patient facing experiences to medical students to maintain empathy and reduce burnout
- This project seeks to improve upon and evaluate the impact of this new program on patients' experience of hospitalization and on students' experience of medical school

PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT

- While many students and patients have participated (See Figure 1) referral response time remains a barrier to access
- Aim: Decrease barrier to accessing program by improving referral and response time
- Method: Transition referral service from email to Secure Chat and increase advertising

Participants	#
Student Volunteers	85
Patients visited	60
Total Visits	94

Figure 1: Statistics of Brown Students at the Bedside over twenty one months at two teaching hospitals

PROGRAM EVALUATION

- Anecdotally, the visits have been a positive experience for both patients and students. (See Figure 2). Formal evaluation has not been done.

METHODS

Patient evaluation

- Complete 10-question post encounter survey (see QR code)



Medical student evaluation

- Complete validated-survey Jefferson Scale of Empathy for objective measure of empathy each semester
- Complete 10-question reflective survey regarding engagement in program and empathy each semester (see QR code)



VOLUNTEER REFLECTIONS

"I think he found this uplifting, and I hope it provided him with a bit of hope."

"The patient was really excited to have a visitor and kept saying how grateful he was to receive the card and candles."

"The patient said that [another student] and my visits cheered her up remarkably."

Figure 2: Quotes pulled from post-encounter synopses completed by medical student volunteers in the Brown Students at the Bedside Program

NEXT STEPS

- Expand advertising of new Secure Chat function by attending IM resident meetings
- Collect data on impact of Secure chat on number of referrals received and completed
- Measure program impact on student empathy overtime as related to involvement with the program, acknowledging impact of outside activities on correlation
- Collect data from patients as they interact with the program and evaluate areas for further improvement

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