

Capstone for Impact Submission | GY2019

Project Title: Depression: A Deadly Predator

Student Name(s): Chilton, Katie

Advisor Names(s): Kathryn Harmes

Branch: Patients & Populations

Path of Excellence: Medical Humanities

Handover/Transition:

If this project can be continued by another UMMS student, you may contact them at the following email address/phone number (N/A if project cannot be handed over): **n/a**

Summary:

I consider myself very much both a doctor and an artist. Therefore, for my patients and populations capstone I hoped to complete a project that would allow me to combine these two disciplines to enhance patient outcomes. My opportunity came while I was working on the inpatient child psychiatry unit.

I attended an enlightening group therapy session in which the children were told to think of depression like a predatory animal; parallels were drawn such as how both depression and predators first get their target alone and then prey on their weaknesses. This analogy really connected with the group leading to a lively discussion and new understanding of how depression works, as well as its seriousness, and so I found myself inspired to turn the discussion into an art piece. Therefore, I made a graphic comic illustrating this analogy to be used in the future as a patient aid for educating adolescents with depression.

In addition, I then wrote an accompanying opinion piece about the importance of patient aids and utilization of different mediums to connect patients with quality information about their mental health. This is especially helpful in adolescents who may be less inclined to understand their disease and susceptible to misinformation on the internet.

Also, in the world of mental health there is still so much stigma and barriers to adequate care that having sharable and engaging materials such as illustrations can be of increased value. I submitted the comic and paper to the Michigan Journal of Medicine and they were both just accepted and so I hope to see them published soon.

The comic still hangs on the walls of the inpatient child psych unit with multiple copies printed out for distribution. Future directions for me would be to make more of these comics as the reaction to my first one

both online and in the inpatient unit were very positive and I love having a creative outlet. I have already started work on a comic about PTSD and the importance of confronting the event as well as the surrounding emotions to help move you forward.

Methodology:

Created a comic inspired by a group therapy session on the inpatient child psych unit to enhance patient education. Used sharpies and markers on a large sheet of sketch paper to make the original piece, as well as then made multiple colored and black and white copies. Shared this comic online which was then widely distributed. Finally, I wrote a paper about the importance of patient decision aids in both the adolescent and depressed population that was accepted to MJM.

Results/Conclusion:

Mental health is a very complex subject with multiple barriers to care such as stigma, access, misinformation, time, etc and so creating new and easy ways for patients to engage with useful information can be of high value.

Reflection/Lessons Learned:

Creativity and medicine go hand in hand. People WANT information about their mental health that is easily accessible and of high quality. Especially in the age of the internet when we are all drowning in information, I can use my gifts of medicine and illustration to enhance my role as a future psychiatrist.