

The CUSOM at CSU Veterinary Shadowing Experience

Purpose: In 2021, the CUSOM at CSU created a veterinary immersive health experience for first-year medical students. Students were required to spend a minimum of 2-4 hours working clinically with Dr. Mandy Cavanagh (DVM) in the CSU Veterinary Teaching Hospital Urgent Care. Students shadowed clinical activities on animal patients with medical veterinary teams to explore the similarities and differences between and the interconnectedness of human and animal health.

Specific learning objectives related to the experience included:

1. Recognize that collaboration between human and veterinary medical professionals can benefit healthcare for humans and animals
2. Recognize that humans and animals share the same environment and health is interdependent
3. Elicit a history of human-animal-environment interactions.

Methods:

All students enrolled in the course were invited to participate in a focus group to inform planning for future courses, imagine areas for collaboration across professions, and contribute to our growing understanding of how One Health-related educational opportunities contribute to medical students' learning. Three voluntarily consenting students ultimately participated in an approximately one-hour focus group. The anonymized transcript was analyzed by research team members for themes to help us understand how students saw connections between human and animal healthcare after engaging in this experience.

Questions asked included "based on your shadowing experience.."

- what specific skills do you feel like you've learned?
- what clinical opportunities do you see for collaboration between human physicians and veterinarians?
- what impacts have occurred on your approach to what/how you gather information from human patients during history taking?

Results: Themes that emerged from the focus group include 1) opportunities for learning from veterinary colleagues including death and dying, quality of life conversations, approaches to non-verbal patients and second-hand history taking, cost of care discussions, provider safety, and impact of human medications and food on animals and vice versa, 2) interdisciplinary relationships and appreciation including jointly addressing burnout and mental health challenges and finding solutions to debt during training 3) imposter syndrome and increasing confidence including effects on fostering a growth mindset, being comfortable with not being an expert, and opportunities for repeated and

extended physical exam practice , and lastly 4) joint community engagement programming including collaborative advocacy and leveraging animal health as a tool to improve human health.

Conclusions: The veterinary shadowing program was a unique opportunity to engage in interdisciplinary clinical experiences for our first-year medical students. In 2022 we had the entire CU at CUSOM cohort sign-up for the experience and hope to illicit more data from their experiences. Additional future directions include the creation of a reciprocal shadowing program where veterinary students can shadow in the human medicine space including the NICU, ED, and in Geriatrics. There is also an opportunity to revisit the veterinary shadowing program at different points in medical student training with different learning objectives. Lastly, students hope to create joint community engagement opportunities with veterinary students to address the health of humans and animals together."