A 2-year Progress Report of the AACAP-Harvard Macy Teaching Scholars Program

Jeffrey Hunt, M.D., Dorothy E. Stubbe, M.D., Mark Hanson, M.D. Cheryl S. Al-Mateen, M.D., Anne Cuccio, M.D., Arden D. Dingle, M.D. Anne Glowinski, M.D., Elizabeth Guthrie, M.D., Kathy Kelley, M.D. Erin M. Malloy, M.D., Renee Mehlinger, M.D., Anne O’Melia, M.D. Jess Shatkin, M.D., Thomas F. Anders, M.D.

Objective: The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP) has partnered with the Harvard Macy Program for Healthcare Educators so that selected child and adolescent psychiatry academic faculty might enhance their teaching expertise in order to possibly enhance recruitment of medical students into child and adolescent psychiatry.

Methods: Thirteen child psychiatry faculty have graduated from the AACAP-Harvard Macy Teaching Scholars Program (HMTSP). There are 10 additional child and adolescent psychiatry faculty members in the process of completing the program. A survey was created to broadly assess the effect of the AACAP-HMTSP training on the first 13 graduates of the program as a pilot to guide future study of the program. Three teaching scholars who are the first authors of this article (JH, DS, MH) conducted this survey and the data interpretation for this study.

Results: Thirteen of the scholars submitted responses to the survey. All participants indicated a high degree of satisfaction with the HMTSP and with the overall usefulness of the concepts learned. All but one of the scholars reported that the program enhanced their teaching effectiveness. The scholars reported increased teaching of medical students (9 of 13) and psychiatry residents (6 of 13) after the HMTSP.

Conclusion: The AACAP-Harvard Macy Teaching Scholars reported high levels of satisfaction with the overall program. Whether the reported increase in medical student and psychiatry resident mentoring and teaching will eventually lead to increased medical student recruitment into child and adolescent psychiatry remains to be determined.

Improved recruitment of medical students into child and adolescent psychiatry (CAP) has been a goal to address the child and adolescent psychiatry workforce shortages dating back more than four decades (1). However, child and adolescent psychiatry workforce shortages continue unabated. Recent American (2) and Canadian (3) CAP physician workforce studies have once again reiterated the importance of CAP undergraduate medical education in the mix of CAP physician recruitment strategies. While the evidence supporting attempts to impact recruitment through a professional development program is limited, there is a rationale for continuing to pursue this ap-
proach. Medical students respond to effective teaching and mentoring often by considering that specialty more favorably (4). Exposure to enthusiastic and engaging role models who are able to carefully inform students that child psychiatry is a field with effective assessments, treatments, and exciting areas of discovery is critical for recruitment (5, 6). Furthermore, early career child and adolescent psychiatrists noted mentors as an important component of their medical school experience (7).

One approach which capitalizes on the use of state-of-the-art educational principles is the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry’s (AACAP) creation of the AACAP-Harvard Macy Teaching Scholars Program (HMTSP). The AACAP-HMTSP was initiated by an AACAP presidential initiative in 2004. This program is a combined educational initiative of AACAP and the Harvard Macy Program for Healthcare Educators. The Harvard program’s primary goal is to enhance the professional development of physicians, basic scientists, and other health care professionals (8). The program provides a selected international group of 55–60 health care professionals per year, including physicians, dentists, doctoral level educators, and advanced practice nurses, with the knowledge base and skills to enhance their expertise in both conducting an educational project of their own design and taking a leadership role in the educational activities at their home institutions. The AACAP-HMTSP goal is to enhance the professional development of CAP academic faculty as educators. Interested academic CAP applicants submitted the Harvard application for review by an AACAP committee. A financial commitment of about 50% of the cost of the program by the applicant’s home institution was required for application to this competitive scholar award.

The program is a 3-year pilot program funded in part by the applicant’s home institutions and by AACAP presidential initiative funds. These funds are time limited and available only for the term of the president. Continued enrollment through AACAP is contingent upon identifying new funding sources. The expectation is that the graduating teaching scholars will continue to disseminate the knowledge, skills, and attitudes about state-of-the-art teaching to their institutions and within the larger academy.

Several Teaching Scholar programs or longitudinal faculty development programs have been developed in the United States and Canada and several strategies to document the effectiveness of these programs have been reported. The most consistent methodology was assessment of participant satisfaction (9–14). Many also document career changes for participating scholars (10, 11). Some teaching scholar programs assessed changes in teaching by tracking student ratings and by blinded videotapes of classroom teaching pre- and post-program involvement (12). Armstrong and Barson (13) used an outcomes logic model to assess the Harvard Macy Physician Educator Program utilizing a variety of sources of information. More recently a teaching scholars program assessment strategy employed interviews of secondary beneficiaries (students) of the teacher scholar programs (14). It noted the value of this program’s scholars’ educational projects. Enhanced recruitment of students into the professions of the teaching scholars has not been studied.

In an effort to evaluate the effectiveness of the AACAP-HMTSP for the first 13 program graduates in meeting its stated goals, a follow-up survey was developed by one of the authors (DS) to assess the impact after 2 years. Three teaching scholars conducted this survey and the data interpretation for this study (JH, DS, MH).

Method

The Harvard Macy Program for Healthcare Educators

The program consists of two sessions in residence at Harvard Medical School: an 11-day winter session and a 6-day spring session. The program combines five major themes: learning and teaching, curriculum, evaluation, leadership, and information technology. There is an emphasis on understanding Kolb’s experiential learning theory (15) and implementing a cycle of learning (16). The overall course and each seminar attempts to engage students by activating prior learning, defining what is to be learned, observing how the new knowledge is implemented, and then challenging students to use the new knowledge in novel ways (17). Learning formats include large-group presentations, interactive exercises, problem-based learning, observations, reflective use of journals, and discussion in large and small groups. A variety of faculty-facilitated small-group formats are used to support learning from observation, to draw together scholars with common interests, and to further the development of each scholar’s individual project for educational change.

Scholars bring to the program a presubmitted educational project for consultation and assistance in its development. This project is based within the scholars’ home institution.

The faculty is from the Harvard Medical School, the Harvard Graduate School of Education, and universities across the United States and Canada. Graduating scholars