Information Transmission to Adolescents and Young Adults with Cancer

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Information Transmission to Adolescents and Young Adults with Cancer is my Bioethics Pathway project. I did 15 semi-structured interviews and surveys with adolescent and young adult cancer patients. In these interviews, I talked to them about their knowledge of their illness and treatments, their interactions with their medical team and how they’ve managed their illness, as well as their preferences for how they’d like information to be communicated with them. The bioethical principle of autonomy was the basis for my research questions, as adolescence and early adulthood can be a challenging time for promoting and maintaining patient autonomy.

Being a part of the Bioethics Pathway has been one of the best experiences of my medical school training. The first and second year humanities and bioethics electives allowed me to explore new topics, and think outside of the traditional medical school coursework. The Palliative Care and Clinical Ethics rotations I did during my third and fourth year exposed me to many real-life ethical challenges, and helped me get a lot more comfortable having discussions with patients about goals of care, pain management, and medical decision making. Completing my Pathway project taught me an immense amount about the research process, from initial IRB approval and study design, through data collection and analysis. The Bioethics Pathway gave me an avenue to design an independent project I was excited about and gave me an opportunity to learn about areas I hope to pursue later in my medical career.

After graduation from the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry, I will begin a residency in pediatrics at Nationwide Children’s Hospital/ Ohio State in Columbus, Ohio. I hope to continue to explore the field of bioethics as it relates to pediatrics.