Developing the Field of Geriatric Forensic Psychiatry

Brittany E. Mott, MD & Elizabeth J. Santos, MD, MPH
University of Rochester Geriatric Psychiatry Fellowship Program

Introduction – Why now?

- The population of individuals 65+ is projected to reach approximately 84 million people by 2050 which is almost DOUBLE what it was in 2012 due to the aging baby boomers
- The field of geriatric forensic psychiatry is new and clinics that specialize in these evaluations do not exist in our country yet
- These types of evaluations are difficult to obtain and costly
- The URMC Psychiatry Department has the collaborative divisions needed to successfully develop this field
  - Geriatric Psychiatry Fellowship since the early 1980s
  - Forensic Psychiatry Fellowship since the early 1980s

First Steps: Innovative Capacity Clinic

Using geriatric psychiatry specialty training to complete an evaluation of a legal context in the elderly population, and then forming a medical opinion and writing a report to summarize findings.

The development of the URMC Geriatric Psychiatry Capacity Clinic

- Types of Evaluations: medical decision making, financial decision making, testamentary capacity, guardianship, independent living capacity, informed consent, advanced planning and end-of-life decision making, capacity to stand trial, not guilty by reason of mental disease or defect
- Medical opinions on these topics result in significant life changes for individuals, so dual training in geriatrics and forensics is ideal for thorough and accurate evaluations
- Creating an affordable, accessible, and equitable resource for this vulnerable population
- Creating templates for these evaluations which will provide more effective communication to the court and increase productivity
- Coordinating with local agencies
- Unique education opportunity for training our residents and fellows, and could provide a template to build similar programs throughout the rest of the country

E-MDTs are a partnership among public, profit and non-profit organizations with the goal of working collaboratively to improve the process of protecting victims of financial exploitation and abuse, as well as improve the outcomes of complex elder abuse cases.” - Center for Elder Law & Justice

Team: Adult Protective Services, Office for the Aging, District Attorney’s Office, Bank/Credit Unions, Civil legal service provider, Forensic Accountant, Geriatric Psychiatrist, Financial Advisors, Elder Abuse Prevention Services, Attorney General’s Office, and other agencies

Success: N=221 cases (April 2013 – December 2015)
- 81.5% reduction in exploitation of assets
- 68.9% end to financial exploitation

Future Directions

- Project ECHO for psychiatric evaluations for incarcerated individuals
- General assessment of aging in prisons and psychiatric treatment
- Crimes committed by patients with dementia
- Nursing home care for individuals with criminal backgrounds
- Continued collaboration with fellowship programs


The Finger Lakes E-MDT Program