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Novel M4 Pediatrics Chief Program Utilizing Near-peer Teaching and Mentoring to Enhance Clerkship Curricula

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Affiliations: All authors certify that they have no affiliations with or involvement in any organization or entity with any financial interest or non-financial interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

Introduction: Near-peer teachers add many benefits to the academic, clinical performance, and enjoyment of near-peer learners in medical education. This enterprise describes and examines how the Creighton University School of Medicine M4 Pediatrics Chief Program fills a gap in medical education by offering an organized and formal methodology for near-peer teaching. The Creighton University M4 Pediatrics Chief Program utilizes select fourth year medical students to orient, teach basic clinical skills, mentor, and participate in curriculum development for the third year Pediatric clerkship students.

Methods: Third year students (n=43) in their Pediatrics clerkship from September 2020 to February 2021 completed surveys at the end of the clerkship to assess the quality and effectiveness of the M4 Pediatrics Chief Program.

Results: Students rated effectiveness of the Chiefs most highly as clerkship guides (4.29, SD=0.79), teachers (4.21, SD=0.92), and mentors (4.19, SD=0.75). Near-peer perspectives, education, provision of pertinent content, serving as a clerkship resource, and being a source of encouragement were the most beneficial aspects of the program. Students reported strong agreement all clerkships should have an M4 Chief Program (4.53, SD=0.88).

Discussion: Because of the positive reviews by the third years students, the M4 Pediatrics Chief Program is now a permanent part of the Pediatric Clerkship. Additionally, other third year clerkships at Creighton University School of Medicine are adopting this model. Finally, the M4 students acting as the chiefs gain valuable leadership and educational skills.

Conclusion: Based on positive perceptions of the "M4 Chief Program", the authors recommend other medical schools consider initiating similar programs within their third year clerkships.