

At Wayne

Students practice bedside manner

By P.N. FINNEY II

SOUTHFIELD—Wayne State University sophomore medical students are getting an unusual opportunity to practice their bedside manner, thanks to a program developed by a Southfield doctor.

The patients the students talk to are actors and actresses employed by the Medical School's Simulation Program. They act out the physical and emotional problems that a real

patient would likely bring to a first-time visit with a general practitioner. The program gives future physicians a chance to test their ability to relate to the patient and discover his or her medical problem. Each interview is videotaped for later scoring by the student's instructor and fellow students.

Credited with developing the program for Wayne State is Dr. Norval Scott, 2555 Mulroy. Scott, a doctor-instructor at Wayne, began work on the program in 1969 and saw it implemented as part of the regular curriculum in 1973. He said the course is going well.

"THE PROGRAM was very successful in the developmental stages, and the reports that I've seen show it is doing very well," Scott said. The course gives the student a definite edge in dealing with patients later in his career, he said.

Up until recently, most doctors acquired these skills by modeling somebody else," Scott said. "In the last

several years, however, the idea of simulation has been making great strides in medical education.

"Basically, there is nothing wrong with most behavior; it is the way you use them," he said. "What we have done is try and find out what constructive behaviors are for a doctor and teach them in a systematic manner."

Interviews are conducted in three studies set up like doctor's offices. Each interview lasts about 18 minutes—during which the student and actor discuss the patient's health problem.

Entirely videotaped, the interview is later reviewed by the student, his instructor, fellow students, and sometimes even the actor involved.

Scott claims this method of teaching has several advantages.

"FOR ONE THING, you can repeat the same situation to a number of people," he said. "Also, our patients don't die or have a psychological trauma if the student blows it."

The videotape has additional advantages, according to Scott. "The tape allows the student to see for himself what he is doing wrong and allows him to correct some of his errors and modify some of his behavior."

Actors for the program are selected for their ability to challenge the student physician. They come from theaters around the Wayne State community like the Hillberry and Bonstelle.

Some actors have ranged from as far as the Ridgeway Players and the Grosse Pointe Theater.

Wayne's course is similar to several other medical schools across the country, Scott said. It is an offshoot of a program developed by Ned Flanders, a pioneer in interaction analysis between students and teachers.

"WE ADAPTED Flanders' system into the medical field," Scott said. "We isolated 12 behaviors normally associated with a medical interview."

The program encourages the student to the supportive statements, encourage, reassure and use the silence of the patient effectively, Scott said. The most is gained by letting the patient talk with as little guidance as possible from the doctor.

"Indirectness is generally considered white hat," he said. "Direct questions are not generally considered conducive to a good interview."

"When you are direct, you get a lot of information, but most of it is unusable. You will generally get more usable information by being indirect and letting the patient talk," he said.

Scott, originally from the University of Southern California, is developing other instructional materials for the medical school. The current simulation program director is Dr. Robert Naccolini, assistant professor of psychiatry.

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