LIC for the Aspiring Clinician Scientist: Perspectives from MD/PhD Students at the University of Toronto

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Outline

- Goals of clinician scientist training programs
- University of Toronto’s MD/PhD program
- Opportunities for LIC to address challenges faced by MD/PhD trainees
- Personal reflections
Who are clinician scientists?

- MDs engaged in clinical care of patients (10-25%) and medical research (75-90%)
- “Bench-to-bedside” medicine
Goals of clinician scientist training programs

■ Develop clinician scientists who synergize clinical and research perspectives

■ Professional identity formation
  - Intersection
  - Dominance
  - Compartmentalization
  - Merger

■ Recent survey of Canadian MD/PhD students identified importance of:
  - Mentorship
  - Flexibility
  - Integration

University of Toronto’s MD/PhD program

- **Structure**

  - MD1
  - PhD
  - MD2
  - Clerkship (MD3-4)

- **2012 survey**: 58% of U of T MD/PhD trainees believe integration between clinical training and research needs to be improved

- **Lack of flexibility in block clerkship (MD3/MD4) challenges identity formation:**
  - *Little opportunity to carry momentum of PhD research forward*
  - *Minimal exposure to clinician-scientist role models*
  - *More disconnected from MD/PhD peer group*

Opportunities for LIC to address challenges faced by MD/PhD trainees

University of Toronto’s LIC Program

- Established in 2014 with 7 students
- Current 2016-17 cohort expanded to include:
  - 27 students
  - Two MD/PhD students

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Opportunities for LIC to address challenges faced by MD/PhD trainees

- **Flexibility**
  - “white space”
  - opportunity to schedule call shifts (at some hospitals)

- **Integration**
  - clinical disciplines

- **Mentorship**
  - preceptors
  - clinician scientists
Enriched LIC Program: designed for aspiring clinician scientists

- Inclusive
  - Available to all LIC students
- Flexible
  - Customize schedule to incorporate clinic time with clinician scientists
- Integrated
  - Remain engaged in research during white space
  - Enriched LIC School: perspectives from practicing clinician-scientists
- Mentorship
  - Formalized academic coaching
  - Increased opportunity for contact with clinician-scientists
Personal Reflections

- Longitudinal mentorship
- Patient-centered learning
- White space provides opportunity to refine clinical areas of interest and explore how to align it with research interests
- Maintain research momentum
Acknowledgements

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