Why Geriatrics is Important to You

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It has been well documented that the geriatric population is rapidly growing with an estimation that people 65 years and older will comprise 23% of the population by 2041.1 This aging population translates into an increasing demand for geriatric care, yet currently, Canada has just half the required geriatricians.2 Furthermore, there are only 22 hours of formal teaching within the UBC undergraduate curriculum centred around geriatric care, with no mandatory clinical rotations during third or fourth year. The bottom line is that demand is much greater than supply, and solutions to balance out the equation are required in order to ensure that the care and needs of older adults can at least come close to being met.

The Summer Institute in Geriatrics was created 22 years ago to enhance knowledge of geriatric principles and to stimulate interest in pursuing careers in geriatric medicine and research. This five-day conference provides medical students, who are presently in their first or second year of medical school, with an exciting opportunity to gain exposure to clinical work and academia in geriatric medicine. Course activities include interactive presentations, patient/problem-based learning workshops, and exposure to a variety of geriatric services including site visits to clinic programs. The 2011 Summer Institute in Geriatrics was hosted by the University of Western Ontario from June 20th–24th. Twenty-nine medical undergraduate students from across the country met in London, Ontario to learn more about geriatric care. While it is likely that years will pass before these pharmacological agents are being used in clinical trials, we are hopeful that these new developments will one day prevent this devastating disease from affecting our patients. Dr. Song strongly encourages all students to think critically and to do research. By doing so, we can impact more people than just our own patient population.

REFERENCES