Time Management
for
BMC Academic Faculty

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Boston Medical Center

February 4th & 18th, 2014
You May Need Time Management (TM) if ≥ 1 of the Following are True

• “Busy” is the answer to “So, how are you doing?”

• In addition to career, your current life includes:
  – Family
  – Friends
  – Hobbies

• Teaching responsibilities

• Competing for NIH funding

• Meetings are your most common daily activity

• Inbox too full to send emails

• The term “R-V-U” is recognizable
Why Us?

Having wasted much time over the years, I therefore make no claim to have emulated all of these (TM) pointers...

Many of us have learned the hard way or from others”

CAJ McLauchlan, Time Management, 1997
Time Management Seminar Goals

1. Set *short* and *long-term* goals

2. Establish *priorities* among competing responsibilities

3. *Plan* and *organize* activities

4. Identify & minimize “*time wasters*”
Absence of Medical TM Literature is Shocking

- Search terms “time management” + “physician” + “academic physician” + “burnout” + “career development”
- Yields ~ 5600 titles/abstracts
- Only 15 studies in these disciplines suggest effective TM techniques:
  - Family Medicine
    - Radiology
  - Emergency Medicine
  - Psychiatry
Why Manage Time?
Poor TM Skills: *Negative Impact*

- Clinical productivity
- Educator success
- Research productivity
- Academic promotion
- Recognition in/out of BMC
- Job satisfaction
- Stress
- Personal life

Burnout!
That **Remarkable** Someone...

- **Visualize someone whose career success you admire...**
  - Section chief?
  - Department chair?
  - Research mentor?
  - Someone outside of medicine?

- **How are they *so* successful?**
  - Devote more time to work?
  - Greater talent?
  - More infrastructure (administrative assistant, lab techs, etc)?
  - Less clinical responsibility?
  - Magic?
Although Several Explanations are Convenient...

Effective individuals uniformly optimize TM skills...

…independent of the work load
Our Single Greatest Misconception...

TM Requires No Time

*and*...

Even Less Planning
Our Second Misconception...

Effective TM is a *Mendelian Trait* that cannot be learned...

And requires no practice.
TM Skill Building is Lifelong…

Many relapses expected!
1. Set Short and Long-Term Goals
How to Set Short and Long-Term Goals

• Short term *often yield* long-range goals
  – Short-term goals = intermediary steps to larger ones

• Honest reality testing = are goals achievable?

• Key Annual Review Queries
  – Do I actually *want to do this*?
  – Are my goals still *realistic*?
  – Am I on *track*?
  – Are goals *consistent* across time?

• Successful professionals *frequently re-set goals*
Imagine 1 Long Term Goal...
Marathon vs. Academic Promotion

**Marathon**
- Try running 5K
- If successful, increase distance
- *Decline invitation* for distracting triathlon training

**Promotion**
- Finish manuscript
- If published, then work on grant... or develop lecture based on same work
- *Decline invitation* for more committee time
Exercise #1 – Setting Goals

- **Identify ≥ 2 long-term career goals**
  - Research?
  - Education?
  - Clinical?
  - Administrative?

- **Identify > 4 short-term goals**
  - Research?
  - Education?
  - Clinical?
  - Administrative?
Exercise #1: Event Order

1. Select my own goals (3 min)
2. Review my goals with small group (n=3 x 3 min)
3. Identify Group Reporter
4. Groups report findings (10 min)
Key Queries for Setting Goals

- What do I really want to do?
- Is passion involved?
- Are goals realistic?
  - Am I on schedule?
  - Does short-term goal success promote long-term success?
2. Set Your Priorities Among Competing Responsibilities
2. Establish Priorities Among Competing Responsibilities

- Acknowledge Endless Requests and Expectations
  - Clinical
  - Educational
  - Research
  - Administrative

- Goal awareness promotes realistic decision-making
- Everyone is certain that their request is essential
- Plan personal time
Covey’s Time Management Matrix Technique (TMMT)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Less Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urgent</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less urgent</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>IV</td>
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*Adapted to reflect that MDs have difficulty labeling any tasks as non-urgent or non-important

Covey S, *The 7 Habits of Effective People*, 1990
Exercise #2– Place Your Activities Into TMMT

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Covey S, The 7 Habits of Effective People, 1990
Exercise #2: Event Order

1. Organize my own goals in TMMT (3 min)

2. Review my goals with small group (n=3 x 3 min)

3. Report group findings (10 min)
   - Create “Master” TMMT (*discuss next session*)
Exercise 2 – follow-up

• Which quadrant(s) contain activities promoting my short- or long-term goals?
  – Am I devoting enough time to key activities?

• Are activities from other quadrants impeding my goal-directed activities?

• Does my Mentor validate important goals?
Coming Next Session: Feb 18, 2014

1. Set short and long-term goals

2. Establish priorities among competing responsibilities *

3. Plan and organize activities

4. Identify & minimize “time wasters”

* Mentor Required
We are not kidding: Feb 18, 2014

Priorities?
I have 8 clinics, 5 lectures, 3 letters of rec, 8 Housestaff evals, am short on RVU’s, and you want me to find time to write a manuscript? Are you kidding?
Time Management (Part II) for BMC Academic Faculty

Craig Gordon, MD, MS
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February 4th & 18th, 2014
Today’s TM Goals

1. Set *short* and *long-term* goals

2. Establish *priorities* among competing responsibilities *

3. *Plan* and *organize* activities

4. Identify & minimize “*time wasters*”

* Mentor Helpful
Refresh Exercise #2– Placing Activities Into TMMT

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Covey S, The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People (1990)
“All My Activities Are IMPORTANT!”
3. Plan and Organize Activities

PLANNING...WHO'S GOT TIME FOR PLANNING! I HAVEN'T EVEN GOT TIME TO GET DRESSED IN THE MORNING.
3. Plan and Organize Activities

- **How do I find time** for activities that promote my short- and long-term goals?
- **How much time** is required for each?
- **KNOW** your schedule in advance
- **CONTROL** your schedule
- Identify **un-avoidable** commitments
  - Clinics, meetings, service time, grant deadlines
Plan Ahead!

• “One day at a time” planning = recipe for failure
  – “urgent” activities just take over

• Planning ahead
  – Create weekly or monthly schedules
  – Facilitates immediate, daily work productivity

• Group similar activities
  – Creates (longer) time blocks for important and less-urgent activities (Quadrant II)
  – Big projects have high “activation energy”
What Do I Need to Be Productive?

• “Tuesdays to Write”
  – How will I effectively use this protected time?

• Think of it as a weekly sabbatical

• DO NOT WAIT... for long time blocks to magically appear

Create Protected Time!
Know Thyself...

• **When** am I most effective?
  – *Morning vs. evening?*
  – *Beginning or end of the work week?*

• **Where** am I most effective?
# Exercise #3 Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of Task</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Large</strong></td>
<td>Require maximal concentration and uninterrupted time</td>
<td>Grant application or manuscript writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(&gt; 1 hour)</td>
<td>Schedule task during most alert and productive time</td>
<td>Performing bench or clinical research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Curriculum development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Proposal for new clinical activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Medium</strong></td>
<td>Require concentration</td>
<td>Clinical documentation (EMR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(30-60 min)</td>
<td>Ideally should be alert and productive</td>
<td>Reviewing and editing section of manuscript</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Preparing slides for presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Small</strong></td>
<td>Require minimal or brief concentration</td>
<td>Returning non-urgent phone calls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5-10 min)</td>
<td>Schedule during less alert portions of the day or week</td>
<td>Signing discharge summaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use as a transition between large or medium-sized tasks (create a “mental break”)</td>
<td>Editing letters of recommendation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Very Small</strong></td>
<td>Require little concentration</td>
<td>Responding to electronic messages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(&lt; 5 min)</td>
<td>Useful as “fill” time while waiting for meeting to begin or on hold on the telephone</td>
<td>Opening and sorting paper mail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Clinical billing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Exercise 3:
Finding the Right Size Time Block?

- Enter activities from all 4 TMMT quadrants into column 3 - Exercise #3 Table

- Consider optimal time length for each activity (examples provided)

- Find TIME BLOCK and PROTECT it!
4. Minimize “Time Wasters”
Your Top 10 Time Wasters
Our Infamous “Time Wasters”
Our Infamous “Time Wasters”

- Email
- Mail (patient-related, others)
- Phone calls or pages
- Physical interruption – “I was just stopping by...”
- Disorganization
- Procrastination
- Repetitive activities
- Waiting for meetings/conferences to begin
- Commuting
Top 10 Time Recapture Solutions
Email*

- **Limit check and/or reply**
  - How many times have you checked email this morning?

- **Handle** messages only once*
  - Immediately **discard unimportant** email
    (Automatic filters avoid some messages/senders)
  - **File important, less urgent** messages for later review
  - Immediately respond only to **time-sensitive messages**

- **Disable** auto-alert beeps, flashes, vibrations

- Reinforces rationale for **infrequently checking email**

*Use same approach for “snail” mail*
Interruption – *Dreaded Knocker at My Door*... 

• **Force** folks to *knock*
  – Close door when concentration required
  – *Barriers make a difference*

• **Open door** when collaboration beneficial

• **Doors Talk:** *Consider message being sent*

• **Respect** colleagues’ closed door
  – *They might respect yours*...
Acknowledge Disorganization:
View #1
Acknowledge Disorganization: View #2
Acknowledge Organization:

View #3
Avoid Procrastination*

• Identify and address prostastation reasons
  – Goal beyond today’s scope
  – Professional assistance required?

• Complete small aliquots of work
  – Celebrate progress no matter how small

“Perfect is the Enemy of Good!”
Interferon for Hepatitis C Virus in Hemodialysis—an Individual Patient Meta-analysis of Factors Associated with Sustained Viral Response

Craig E. Gordon,* Katrin Uhlig,* Joseph L. Lau, Christopher H. Schmid, Andrew S. Levey,* and John W. Bong,

*Department of Nephrology, Division of Clinical Care Research, Department of Medicine, Tufts Medical Center, Boston, Massachusetts

Background and objectives: Hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection is prevalent in hemodialysis patients and causes excess mortality. Interferon (IFN) treatment of chronic HCV infection in hemodialysis patients results in high sustained virological response (SVR) rates 6 mo after treatment. The authors aimed to identify factors associated with SVR in hemodialysis patients through analysis of individual patient data obtained from systematic review of published literature. Design, setting, participants: The source of data was a meta-analysis of 1996-2009, and prospective studies describing IFN treatment of hemodialysis patients with chronic HCV infection published with individual patient data were included. To identify factors associated with SVR, logistic regression was applied for adjusted analysis. Results: Twenty studies of IFN treatment provided data on 483 patients. Overall SVR was 40% and in univariate analyses was higher with 1) three million units or higher three times weekly of IFN; 2) treatment for at least 6 mo; 3) treatment completion; 4) baseline HCV RNA; 5) female gender; and 6) early virological negativity. Although limited by missing data, these relationships persisted in multivariate regression. Conclusions: SVR is more likely with higher IFN dose, longer treatment duration, treatment completion, female gender, lower HCV RNA and early virological negativity. For appropriate treatment candidates, regimens should consist of three million units of IFN three times weekly for at least 6 mo, with patients encouraged to complete the full course.


MOLECULAR STRUCTURE OF NUCLEIC ACIDS

We wish to express our apologies for the nomenclature errors in our recent paper on the molecular structure of nucleic acids. We have now corrected these errors and have submitted a revised version of our paper for publication. We apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused our readers and we look forward to hearing your feedback on this important topic.

NATURAL

April 25, 1953

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In other words, if an error occurs, we apologize for the error, produce a revised version, and request feedback on the updated version.
Standardize Repetitive Activities

• *Patient education handouts*

• *Paste frequently used phrases into EMR template*
  – Use quick-text functions
  – Applies to e-mail and Microsoft Word

• Identify repetitive tasks & **automate**

• *Up front time* cost affords **long-lasting benefits**
Meeting & Conference Wait Time

• **Use short wait times for portable work**
  – Email via smart-phone
  – Patient-related or other paperwork
  – Edit letters, sections of manuscripts/grants
  – Update calendar

• May be **OK to interact** with others!
  – Make a conscious choice
Capture Commute Time

Public Transport
- Write manuscript/grant
- Make slides for talk
- Paperwork
- Read journals
- Reflect
- Breathe/Relax

Driving
- Plan the day
- Journals on CD
- Learn foreign language
- Reflect on goals
- Call patients
- Enjoy the moment
TM Summary

1. *Set Short* and *Long-Term Goals* in TMMT

2. *Establish priorities* among competing responsibilities; *validate w/mentor*

3. *Plan* and *organize these* activities

4. Minimize “*time wasters*”

5. Identify (1-2) *areas* of *TM inefficiency* and strive to improve

6. After initial success, tackle new challenges

7. *Celebrate victories*
The Ultimate TM Device