

Using Photovoice to Evaluate the *Art of Medicine Rounds*, A Monthly Humanities Series in a Medical School in the Rural US South

Background

Medical educators have long argued that exposure to the humanities is an important part of training well-rounded, compassionate, and thoughtful physicians.¹ Yet surprisingly few medical schools in the United States (US) provide longitudinal humanities-based learning experiences for students, residents, faculty, and staff. Recognizing the need for consistent humanities enrichment at the University of Alabama College of Community Health Sciences (UA CCHS), Alan Blum, MD implemented a monthly humanities event series, *The Art of Medicine Rounds*, in August, 2012. This interdisciplinary series has hosted more than 90 presenters from a myriad of disciplines throughout the university and from other medical schools in the US and Canada. Table 1 includes a list of titles of the Rounds over the past five years. The purpose of this study will be to evaluate the impact of *The Art of Medicine Rounds* on its participants with Photovoice, a community-based participatory methodology that uses photographs and focus group discussions to explore a subject of interest².

Program Setting. CCHS is located in Tuscaloosa, Alabama and is a regional campus of the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Medicine. CCHS was established in 1972 as a small family practice residency training program to begin meeting the critical demand for primary care physicians in Alabama's medically underserved rural areas. The College now has 16 residents a year in its three-year family medicine program, 10 to 15 family medicine graduate

fellows each year in six fellowship programs, 30 medical students in each of the third and fourth years, and 50 graduate students enrolled in masters degree programs in population health and rural health. There are more than 50 full-time clinical and research faculty and over 300 full-time clinical and administrative staff.

Program Description. Throughout its 8-year history, *The Art of Medicine Rounds* has provided an extracurricular opportunity for all who study and work at the CCHS to attend an event and share a light buffet supper on the first Thursday of each month that begins just after the close of office hours. The goals of the series include fostering a sense of community across the spectrum of students and staff and providing cultural enrichment in a region with no art museum and few offerings in the performing arts outside of the university.

The interactive events have attracted a wide cross-section of CCHS faculty, staff, students, and residents. An average of 30 participants attend each month. *The Art of Medicine Rounds* consists of three parts: a brief group discussion of an artwork; a 30-minute guest presentation ranging from a musical or dance performance to a talk on the history of medicine or on the personal experience of illness; and a question and answer session and discussion with the audience. The guest presenters at *The Art of Medicine Rounds* have come from a wide variety of disciplines, including music, dance, poetry, sculpture, history, theater, storytelling, and philosophy. In April 2020 the *Rounds* became a virtual one due to the COVID-19 pandemic. One consolation for the loss of smalltalk at the buffet dinner has been an increase in online viewership by students and staff members. One medical student recently observed, “To me, the beauty of this series is that it covers a diverse range of topics such as poetry and the visual arts in a casual setting which allows for attendees to learn and exchange ideas freely” An administrative assistant remarked, “I

had no idea what to expect but found it to be very interesting and enjoyable. I started inviting family and friends to attend in person with me, and some of them have continued to tune in each month.”

Photovoice as an Evaluation Tool. Photovoice was developed in the 1990s by Wang and Burris at the University of Michigan.³ They defined the methodology as “a process by which people can identify, represent, and enhance their community through a specific photographic technique.”³ Participants in a Photovoice project meet in a focus group format on at least two occasions. In the first meeting, participants undergo Photovoice training. After this, participants are charged with capturing images which “tell their story.” The group then comes back together, sometimes on multiple occasions, to discuss and analyze the photographs.

Goals and Objectives

The goals of *The Art of Medicine Rounds* are to foster the development of well-rounded, compassionate and thoughtful medical professionals, a greater sense of community across CCHS, and an enhanced appreciation of diversity, equity and inclusion. The events are usually entertaining as well as thought-provoking, and they represent one of the only college-sponsored opportunities to relax and reconnect with one another. The goal of this study will be to evaluate the ways in which *Art of Medicine* has had an impact its attendees, in the hope of inspiring others to attend.

Evaluation Team. Alan Blum, MD created the *Art of Medicine Rounds* based on his 20-year participation as a presenter in the Baylor College of Medicine course, “Compassion and the Art of Medicine,” created by Warren Holleman, PhD. Dr. Blum is a family physician and the Gerald

Leon Wallace, MD Endowed Chair in Family Medicine at the University of Alabama. A self-taught artist and a frequent guest presenter at medical schools throughout the US and Canada for four decades, he has published sketches and stories of patients in numerous medical journals, including *JAMA*, *CMAJ*, *The Pharos*, and *Literature and Medicine*. As the individual who selects the topics and presenters for *The Art of Medicine Rounds*, he will contribute to all aspects of the project.

Mercedes M. Morales-Alemán, PhD is Assistant Professor at CCHS and the Chair of the CCHS Committee for Academic Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. She is a community psychologist and program evaluator with over 20 years of experience in community based participatory research. She will lead the evaluation effort and supervise the graduate assistant.

Nelle T. Williams, MSLS is Associate Professor and Library Director for CCHS. She co-developed the Art of Medicine Rounds with Dr. Blum and oversees the arrangements for each event. Ms. Williams will provide her insights into the evaluation process. She will also aid in the management, display, dissemination, archiving, and preservation of the photographs and stories produced by the project.

Graduate Assistant. A graduate research assistant at CCHS with experience in evaluation research will aid with all aspects of this project.

Evaluation Strategies and Methods. Table 2 below provides a brief overview of our proposed study tasks and timeline. We will begin the project by identifying, hiring and training a graduate research assistant (GRA) to lead the participants through the participatory evaluation study. Dr. Morales-Alemán will train the GRA in Photovoice and supervise the development and submission of the human subjects protocol to the UA Institutional Review Board (IRB). After

IRB approval, we will begin recruitment of participants. We will recruit two groups (8-10 participants each): Faculty/Alumni and Current Trainees. Informed consent will be obtained from all participants with an IRB-approved consenting process. The implementation of the evaluation protocol will include two main components: training and participatory analysis.

Training. Each of the two cohorts will be invited to at least two focus group meetings. The first meeting will be an opportunity to introduce the project, answer questions, and provide Photovoice training. The training will encompass the use of cameras on the participants’ phones (e.g., tips for taking photographs; the use of an online secure platform to store the digital pictures etc.), ethical issues (e.g., subject consent for photographs), power dynamics (i.e., the relationship between the photographer and the subjects), and a discussion on how the photographs will be utilized and “given back” to the community of interest.¹ The starting point for participants will be: “Please share how your participation in *The Art of Medicine Rounds* has affected your experiences in clinical medicine.”

Participatory Analysis. After participants have had the opportunity to take their photographs, they will then move through a 3-step participatory analysis process of selecting a subset of images, sharing their context, and identifying themes. The GRA will serve as the main facilitator of this process and aid participants in the analysis. The research team will work with the participants to present the evaluation results to the broader CCHS community.

Table 2. “Art of Medicine” Photovoice Evaluation Study: Timeline by Month					
Tasks	1-3	4-6	7-10	11-14	15-18
Graduate Student Assistant Recruitment and Training	X				
Submission of Human Subjects Protocol to UA IRB	X				
Participant Recruitment (n=16-20)	X	X			
Photovoice Trainings and Focus Groups		X	X		
Data Analyses		X	X	X	X
Report Writing (e.g. manuscripts)				X	X

¹ Steps are adapted from Wang and Burris, 1997.

References

1. Horton MEK. The orphan child: humanities in modern medical education. *Philosophy, Ethics, and Humanities in Medicine*. 2019;14(1):1.
2. Mader EM, Roseamelia C, Lewis SL, Arthur ME, Reed E, Germain L. Clinical training in the rural setting: using photovoice to understand student experiences. 2016.
3. Wang C, Burris MA. Photovoice: Concept, methodology, and use for participatory needs assessment. *Health education & behavior*. 1997;24(3):369-387.

Budget

Budget Justification. Funding is requested in the amount of \$25,000 to hire a graduate student to assist with this evaluation study and for salary support for the evaluator on this project, Dr. Morales-Alemán.

BUDGET CATEGORY					Total Award
PERSONNEL*	<i>Role on Project</i>	<i>% Effort on Project</i>	<i>Base Salary</i>	10/01/20-03/31/22	
A. Key Personnel (KP):					
Dr. Morales Aleman	Investigator & Evaluator	18 months	4.00%	136,379.52	5,455.18
TOTAL KEY PERSONNEL				<u>5,455.18</u>	
B. Other Personnel:					
TBD	GA	18 Months	100.00%	17,550.00	17,550.00
TOTAL OTHER PERSONNEL				<u>17,550.00</u>	
TOTAL PERSONNEL				<u>23,005.18</u>	
PERSONNEL - FRINGE BENEFITS**					
UA Fringe Benefit Rate			32.00%		1,745.66
GA FICA Summer Only			7.70%		225.23
TOTAL BENEFITS				<u>1,970.88</u>	
TOTAL PERSONNEL				<u>24,976.06</u>	

**AND
BENEFITS**

TOTAL DIRECT COSTS (including consortium)	24,976.06
<i>TOTAL PROJECT COSTS (Direct plus Indirect)</i>	<u>24,976.06</u>

Biosketches

Alan Blum, MD is a family physician and Professor and Endowed Chair in Family Medicine at the University of Alabama, where he also founded the Center for the Study of Tobacco and Society. Since 1998 the Center has produced more than 20 museum and online exhibitions about the tobacco industry and the anti-smoking movement. Dr. Blum was editor of the *Medical Journal of Australia* and the *New York State Journal of Medicine*, where he produced the first theme issues on the world tobacco pandemic at any journal. A self-taught artist, Dr. Blum has been invited to share his sketches and stories of patients at dozens of conferences, courses in the medical humanities, and medical school and family medicine residency graduations. He has had solo juried exhibitions at Houston Community College, the University of Texas Health Sciences Center at Houston, the Texas Medical Center Library, the Kentuck Museum and Gallery in Northport, Alabama, and several medical schools and hospitals. His sketches and stories have appeared in numerous publications including the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, *Literature and Medicine*, *The Pharos*, *Pulse*, *Hektoen International*, and *The Color Atlas of Family Medicine*. Sets of his three art books *Seeing Patients: The Sketchiest Details*, *Ladies in Waiting*, and *Gentle Men* have been acquired by the National Library of Medicine and numerous other medical libraries. In 2018-19, he was the guest artist for the *Canadian Medical Journal Association's* monthly medical humanities feature CODA. In 2019, he was elected as the international delegate to the board of the Canadian Association for Health Humanities.

Mercedes M. Morales-Alemán, PhD is an Assistant Professor at CCHS and the Chair of the CCHS Committee for Academic Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. She is a community psychologist and program evaluator with over 20 years of experience conducting community based participatory research. Her previous collaborative evaluation work includes: a city-wide educational and economic intervention funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation; a statewide early childhood school-readiness education program in Michigan; and a set of community-level, coalition-lead, health promotion programs (i.e., healthy eating, exercise, etc.) among adolescent youth in Lima, Peru sponsored by the US Embassy to Peru. In 2013-2014, she also worked as a consultant on a Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration initiative to build evaluation capacity among their grantees. Through this work, she trained staff at an Alabama non-profit organization (Sylacauga Alliance for Family Enhancement) in evaluation methodologies and aided them in the development of an evaluation plan for one of their youth community programs. Between 2016 and 2018 Dr. Morales-Alemán was the lead investigator of the Qualitative Research Core for a program evaluation of an Alabama Medicaid waiver.

The University of Alabama Medicaid Program Evaluation Team. (2017). Alabama Medicaid Transformation Waiver Evaluation Baseline Report. Alabama Medicaid.

Morales-Alemán, M.M. (August, 2014). Final Report: Action Plan and Recommendations for Sylacauga Alliance for Family Enhancement's Evaluation of Why Try Program. Service to Science Initiative. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Foster-Fishman, P., Schultz, J., Morales-Alemán, M. M., & Camacho, L. (March 2011). Evaluability Assessment of the Impact of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs Coalition Training in Lima, Peru. Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America.

US State Department Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL).

Nelle T. Williams, MSLS is Associate Professor and Library Director for the College of Community Health Sciences at The University of Alabama. Williams is responsible for directing the daily operations of the Health Sciences Library and works to fulfill the information needs of medical students, residents, faculty and staff. She has oversight for all library faculty and staff, the library budget and collection development, and provides literature searching services.

Williams earned her BA degree in History/Integrated Science from Morehead State University and obtained her MSLS from the University of Kentucky. She has served as librarian in various medical, hospital and public libraries including the VA Medical Center in Birmingham, AL, Good Samaritan Hospital in Lexington, KY, Joplin Public Library in Joplin, MO, and St. John's Regional Medical Center in Joplin, MO. Williams joined the College of Community Health Sciences in 1998

September 14, 2020

Dear Dr. Blum, Dr. Morales-Alemán, and Ms. Williams:

Thank you for the opportunity to share my support of your Fundamental Role of the Arts and Humanities in Medical Education (AAMC) proposal entitled “*Using Photovoice to Evaluate the Art of Medicine Rounds: A Monthly Humanities Series in a Medical College in the Rural US South.*”

Over the last 8 years the *Art of Medicine Rounds* has become an important part of our College of Community Health Sciences professional development programming. The series serves as a central forum to build community and examine the intersections between Medicine and Art. Your proposed Photovoice evaluation study will provide some key insights into how the series has impacted participants over the years and your interdisciplinary team is well positioned to conduct the work.

As Associate Dean of Research and Health Policy of **The College of Community Health Sciences (CCHS)**, I am pleased to support this proposal and will ensure that you have access to the resources available to through our College to make your research successful.

This work is well aligned with CCHS’s mission which “shaping globally capable, locally relevant and culturally competent physicians through learner-centered, community-based medical education and mentoring”. We are excited to provide you with an infrastructure to transform this evaluation project into a reality. We feel strongly that it will be of benefit to our CCHS learners and research enterprise.

Thank you for again for the opportunity to share my support for this proposal.

Sincerely,



Associate Dean, Research and Health Policy
College of Community Health Sciences

TABLE 1
THE ART OF MEDICINE ROUNDS, 2016-2020 (WITH LINKS TO SELECTED RECORDINGS)

2016

Egyptian Medicine Five Years after the Uprising
 When Knowing More about a Patient Enables Us to Do Less
 Bill Winternitz: A Man of Science and Art
 “We Used What We Had”: Harvey B. Searcy, MD, Rural Alabama Doctor
 Diabetes for a Day
Tales of a Country Obstetrician
 Compassion and the Art of Medicine
 Shall We Dance?
Griefmania
 When More Doctors Smoked Camels
 Secrets of Cerebral Palsy

2017

Going to the Dogs: Using Animal Assisted Therapy to Improve Human Well-Being
 Where Words Fail, Music Speaks
 A Tour of the Tuscaloosa Museum of Art...As It Prepares to Close
 Magic and Medicine
 Discussion of the Film *The Doctor*
 Tell Me A Story: Sharing Memorable Moments and Encounters with Patients
 Portraits of Care: An Artist’s Reflections of Painting Patients and Caregivers
 Chocolate! A Mindful Tasting Experience
 Pet Therapy
 The Art of Signing
 The Art of Learning Medicine: The Works of May Lesser

2018

The Art of Puzzles
 The Beautifully Balanced Life
 Surviving Art: A Sculptor’s Work Before and After His Stroke
 Operation Desert Storm Experiences
Puff Your Cares Away: Smoking on the Silver Screen
 3 Pecha Kucha Presentations
 The Clinical Art of Poetry

The Stories Behind the Making of the Courthouse Murals
 A Visit to *The Museum of Possibilities*
 Race, Medicine, and Southern Landscapes: The Founding of the National Memorial for Peace and Justice
In Flanders Fields: Medicine’s Favorite War Poem

2019

Music Therapy: A Prescription for Health
 Mama Said Idle Hands Are the Devil’s Handiwork: Impact of handicraft on Mental Health
 Medicine’s Metaphors: The Wit and Wisdom of Samuel Vaisrub, MD
 Folk Art? Outsider Art? Raw Art? Visionary Art? The Extraordinary Scrolls of Frank Calloway;
<https://alabama.box.com/s/x9mk8b8mv6esmp8jnyvpvj9212hcs4wc8>
 “That Doctor Never Looked Up!” The Fading Art of Observation
 Feel the Rhythm: The Health Benefits of Dance
 The Biology of Art
 Context and Health among Latino/a/x Youth
Tomorrow too: The Brenda Monologues;
<https://ua.tegrity.com/#/recording/4a3725da-955d-4a8e-8661-0e2931f978dd?playbackToken=25F6JZPW3UNFV>
 The Crimson Pride Chorus Barbershop Chorus Holiday Concert

2020

T.R.M. Howard: Doctor, Entrepreneur, Civil Rights Pioneer
 Harnessing the Power of Music in Medicine;
<https://alabama.app.box.com/s/ifzdabmpl4g2ph3re3ebnvtpucuxiifg>
 Dispelling Myths about Robert Frost
 Turning the Page: How those with blindness, quadriplegia, cerebral palsy, and dyslexia won the right to read an e-book;
<https://alabama.box.com/s/ccsc6w1c44bdwjdjlxmx4h72htkafzxn>
 Stories of Healing;
<https://alabama.box.com/s/fxsgx94zd0ow5188zqgdrcuekbn0acpa>
 Training Healers;
<https://alabama.box.com/s/glinyz1xbhss50xjq00e1af8yifl6aax>
 A History of racial Disparities in Alabama;
<https://alabama.app.box.com/s/64xb40f65y0s0u1ec9r6948>