How to run a successful case conference - tips for presenters & facilitators

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Case conferences remain a nearly universal teaching tool by which physicians at a variety of levels of training gain exposure to disease. The theoretical goals of a case conference include exposing a learner to a clinical situation which he/she would not have otherwise been exposed to, as well as to review the salient diagnostic and treatment steps involved in the patient’s care. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of these conferences may vary widely, and the didactic nature of a typical case conference room often sees some audience members focused on the distractions of the busy day, or even catching up on needed sleep. In this conference, we will review the core components of adult learning theory, and discuss how these can be applied to create a stimulating and memorable case conference teaching session. We will focus on how to engage audience members using essential clinical reasoning steps including building of differential diagnosis, choice of physical exam, and “next best test” selection. These topics will be useful for both presenters of case conferences, as well as conference facilitators (consultants and residents). Our discussion will conclude with tips for presenters on how to maximize the impact of your presentation slides, including topic reviews slides, in order to best engage your audience. At the end of this workshop, participants will be able to: (1) Identify the components of adult learning theory applicable to clinical conferences; (2) demonstrate how to use clinical reasoning tools/techniques to enhance audience participation; and (3) create stimulating and meaningful presentations that help engage the audience and maximize learning.