

Neurology Clerkship Survival Guide: Des Moines

The Schedule

Outpatient Adult Neurology (1 week)

Expect to be in clinic from 8am – 4pm each day. The three attendings that you will work with are Dr. Rankin, Dr. Melchert, and Dr. Alsharabati. You likely will not spend more than two days with the same attending. When working with Dr. Rankin you will get to see at least a few patients independently each day and will likely perform Botox injections on her migraine patients. With Dr. Melchert you will sit on each patient visit and he will ask you to do the neurologic exam on each patient that he sees. When working with Dr. Alsharabati expect to primarily be shadowing however you may get to see a couple patients on your own as well as watch him conduct an EMG.

Outpatient Pediatric Neurology (1 week)

Most mornings start around 9am or 10am and you will likely be done around 3pm. Make sure to check Epic prior to attending clinic to confirm what time you will need to be there as it varies greatly each day depending on the provider. You will spend at least one day with each of the following providers: Dr. Croxton, Dr. Narawong, or Dr. Tripathy. You will get to see quite a few patients independently, so be sure that you are comfortable with taking a good pediatric history and performing a neurological exam.

Inpatient Neurology (2 weeks)

You will be part of the Neurology consult service from 8am-4pm every day. You will also have one weekend call shift. This portion of the rotation is a great learning experience because you essentially get to serve as the resident and consult on a variety of patients independently each day. Each morning check in with the nurse, Amy, about which patients you should go see, as well as the general plan for the day. She is WONDERFUL at making sure that you are kept in the loop each day. Once you are assigned a patient, expect to continue following that patient throughout your time there unless your attending tells you otherwise. You will likely see 3-4 patients each day. You will work with Dr. Byreddy and Dr. Kovi during your time here; both enjoy working with students and will provide you with many learning opportunities.

The Test

This is an in-house exam consisting of 80 multiple choice questions. This exam is one of the easier clerkship exams that you will take during core year. A study guide is given to you at the beginning of the clerkship and anything in there is fair game for the exam. If you take the time to go through the entire study guide, then you will be sure to pass the exam. The Neurology chapter in the First Aid for USMLE Step 1 book is also very helpful and has great diagrams to supplement the information in the study guide.

Other Resources

You can use a question bank of some sort whether it is UWorld or AMBOSS to further engrain neurology concepts into your brain. The exam questions on the real test are not nearly as difficult as these questions, however they are useful for learning and understanding concepts. If practice questions are not your thing, you will be fine just focusing on the neurology study guide as well.

In addition to the study guide you will be provided with a variety of lecture printouts containing all the CCOM lecture materials for the clerkship. There is a lot of detailed supplemental information in here that you can use as a reference when going through the study guide and for general knowledge.

All the Neurojeopardy slides will be provided to you on ICON. Some of these questions contain content that you may see on the exam. If you decide to go through these on your own in preparation for the exam, focus on the 200 and 400 level questions, along with a few of the 600 level questions. The exam will not be as difficult as some of the 800 and 1000 level questions found there.

Other Information

Some basic topics in neurology that you should take some time to read upon during the first week of your rotation include the following: headaches (primary vs secondary causes), seizures (focal vs generalized), stroke, movement disorders, demyelinating conditions, and respective treatments for each. Each day you will have a lecture at 4pm with Iowa City students led by Dr. Cho or Dr. Adams. These lectures will consist of either Neurojeopardy, various clinical neurology topics, or student case presentations that are meant to aid your learning during the clerkship.