FAER

Foundation for Anesthesia Education and Research

FAER and Private Practice: Opportunities for Research and Education Collaboratives

Edward (Ted) Anthony Yaghmour, M.D., FASA

Two quotes best illustrate the importance of research not only for academic practices but also private practices. The first quote has been attributed to Albert Einstein: "If we knew what it was we were doing, it would not be called research, would it?"

Research results in methods, practices and treatments that we may use to improve the outcomes of our patients. It creates the opportunities to promote patient safety and improve our efficiency in the perioperative arena. Some of these opportunities even reduce healthcare costs which in turn deliver a product that achieves the goals of our hospital and practice administrators for our groups. Ultimately, these successes ingratiate our practices in the eyes of hospital and practice administrators and may lead to leverage in negotiations for service contracts.

The second quote has been attributed to Japanese physicist Sumio Iijima: "Research can be undertaken in any kind of environment as long as you have the interest. I believe that true education means fostering the ability to be interested in something." This quote exemplifies why research should not only take place in academic centers but also in private centers. Our true challenge/mission should be accomplishing this endeavor, changing the pie in the sky dream to a realizable goal. Importantly, there are already opportunities in place to help us achieve this goal.

One such example, FAER's Abstract Poster Session, is one of the highlights of PRACTICE MANAGEMENT™. The poster session is a great opportunity for a research and education collaborative between private practice groups and FAER. PRACTICE MANAGEMENT 2020 will be held in Las Vegas, from January 17-19. Many ASA and non-ASA members including practice administrators and hospital executives will gather to discuss and learn about the practice of medicine. Noteworthy, 65-70 percent of the attendees of this conference self-identify as either in group or solo practice.

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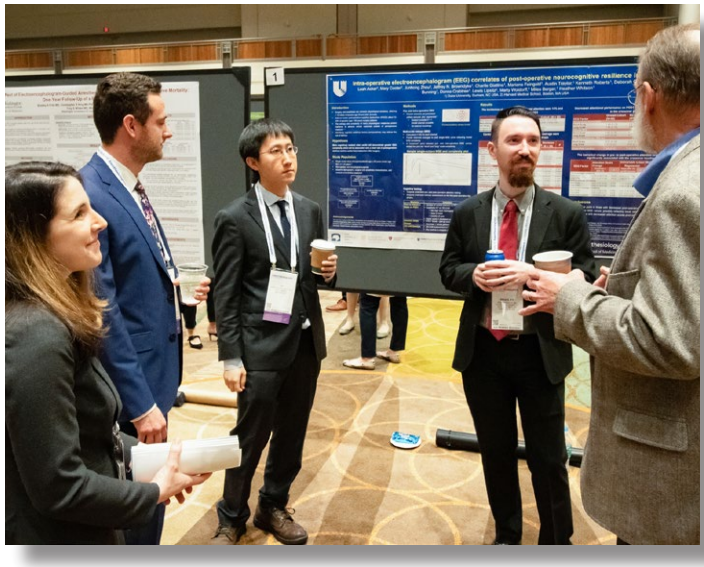

FAER Resident Scholar Bradley Fritz, M.D., (*second from right*) presents his poster at ANESTHESIOLOGY 2019.

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Each year, solicitations for practice management posters to be submitted are advertised in the *ASA Monitor* in one of the summer issues. The topics for the submissions include: 1) quality improvement, 2) leadership development, 3) challenging cases and their innovative solutions in practice management, and 4) research in perioperative management. Notwithstanding, there are three monetary awards given for the best three posters. These topics likely resonate with private practice groups, not only from the point of view of being involved in research but as an opportunity to trade innovative ways to better manage their practices.

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There is also data available to assist in research focused on some of the topics important to private practice groups. Recent statistics released by ASA’s Anesthesia Quality Institute (AQI) indicate that there are more than 600 groups benchmarking outcomes, number of cases, percent of physical status classifications, payment types and patient demographics. The National Anesthesia Clinical Outcomes Registry (NACOR) started in 2008 includes 63 million cases and 25,000 participating clinicians. The big data housed by AQI may be used to perform research with the intent on improving operating room and recovery room efficiencies, patient outcomes, and resource utilization of a private practice group.

FAER has programs available as well to aid the groups interested in such research and education opportunities, facilitating our participation and collaboration. It’s time for us to respond. Each year at ANESTHESIOLOGY®, FAER provides both medical students and residents the opportunity to present their research on a national stage. FAER’s Medical Student Anesthesia Research Fellowship (MSARF) program offers medical students the opportunity to conduct anesthesiology research, train in scientific methods and techniques, and learn how to incorporate research into a medical career. While this research is often conducted at an academic institution, nothing precludes private practice groups from getting involved. Private practice groups are encouraged to apply to act as a host institution for the Medical Student Anesthesia Research Fellowship (MSARF) program by providing both a research project and dedicated mentor for an eight-week fellowship over the summer. (see side bar for dates and deadlines).

Attendees at PRACTICE MANAGEMENT 2019 discuss a digital poster presentation.

Some of the research topics covered by residents at ANESTHESIOLOGY 2019 during FAER’s poster presentations also touched on issues in our daily practices. For example, improving preoperative functional assessment to enhance resource allocation; reducing healthcare costs, morbidity and mortality; the perioperative epidural use and risk of delirium in surgical patients; and virtual reality as an adjunct to anesthesia in the operating room.

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Stop by FAER’s booth at PRACTICE MANAGEMENT 2020

to meet the team and find out about the exciting programs FAER has in the works!

1. **PRACTICE MANAGEMENT 2020 Abstract Poster Viewings:**
   Location: Exhibit Hall
   Friday and Saturday, January 18 and 19
   9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
2. Applications for FAER’s 2020 Spring Grant Cycle close on **February 15, 2020**
3. MSARF Host applications open September 2020 – **https://www.asahq.org/faer/programs/medicalstudentfellowships/summerfellowships**

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Other topics of anesthesia research significant to the private practice group setting which have been studied or are currently being studied include:

1. Staffing models which would reduce anesthesia labor costs and improve scheduling efficiency
2. A system wide cap on the amount of operating rooms running in a large multi-hospital system
3. Anesthesiologists assistants and nurse anesthetists care team model opportunities
4. Choice of preoperative medications and pain management models which can reduce PACU length of stay
5. Benchmarking clinical productivity for non-operating room (NORA) cases.

Reflecting on the published "practice management" research of the very recent years, one cannot deny the impact that research has had on how private practice groups as well as academic and hybrid groups operate. If we want answers promoting improvements in health care delivery, patient safety and better outcomes, it is imperative that we support the research that will result in our goals. This research may tangibly demonstrate a group's value to patients, hospitals, payers, malpractice carriers and surgical colleagues.

Research and education in anesthesiology is important to all (academic and private practitioners), if not only while we were residents and fellows, but after graduation. Our daily practice reflects what countless researchers have observed, recorded and published. Involvement in research and education is noble, and our specialty will truly benefit from private practice anesthesiologists' personal participation, collaboration, and/or support of others who make research and education their number one priority.

References:

1. Yaghmour EA. FAER Abstract Poster Session: A PRACTICE MANAGEMENT™ conference gem. *ASA Monitor*. 2017;81:34-35.
2. Anesthesia Quality Institute: Where Data Becomes Value. American Society of Anesthesiologists website. https://www.asahq.org/macra/solutionsresources/registries. Last amended August 15, 2019. Last accessed October 31, 2019.

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