

FROM THE SOCIETY: PART II

SGIM Research on Careers (ROC) Interest Group: Origins, Evolution, and Future Work

Sara Poplau, BA; Mark Linzer, MD; Linda Bair Manwell, MS; and Martha Gerrity, MD

Ms. Poplau is a senior research project manager at Minneapolis Medical Research Foundation, Minneapolis, MN; Dr. Linzer is a professor of medicine at the University of Minnesota and the Division Director of General Internal Medicine, Hennepin County Medical Center, Minneapolis MN; Ms. Manwell is the Research Administrator for the Division of General Internal Medicine at the University of Wisconsin–Madison School of Medicine & Public Health; and Dr. Gerrity is professor of medicine at Portland Veterans Affairs Medical Center and the OHSU Center for Evidence-based Policy.

In 1988, at the request of their chair at Duke University, Mark Schwartz and Mark Linzer sat down to plan a study to investigate a decline in interest in careers in internal medicine. Thus was born the SGIM Career Choice Task Force. The study showed that the inpatient training environment was no longer producing interest in internal medicine careers.¹ Several years later, SGIM President Mark Linzer asked the Career Choice Task Force to focus on physician job satisfaction. This led to the formation of the SGIM Career Satisfaction Study Group or CSSG. In 1995, the CSSG was funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to perform the Physician Worklife Study. Elnora Rhodes was the project manager, and several investigators, including Martha Gerrity, Dawn Dewitt, Bob Konrad, and Eric Williams, among many others, joined the study group. The study produced job satisfaction measures² and a better understanding of predictors of physician satisfaction, stress, and burnout.^{3,4}

In 2001, the CSSG was funded by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) to assess the impact of work conditions on physicians and their patients. This study, titled MEMO (Minimizing Error Maximizing Outcome), brought in new investigators including Linda Baier Manwell, Anita Varkey, Said Ibrahim, Joseph Rabatin, Perry An, and many others. MEMO demonstrated relationships between work conditions and clinician outcomes and between work conditions and patient outcomes.⁵ MEMO also

showed how work conditions predisposed to health disparities.⁶ While the MEMO study was in progress, the CSSG decided a name change was in order, given the expanded focus on careers. The Research on Careers (ROC) Interest Group became our name and mission.

For 10 consecutive years, investigators from the MEMO study, the Physician Worklife Study, and the current Healthy Work Place (HWP) study have been honored to host the ROC Interest Group at SGIM's annual meetings. Over the years we have had the pleasure of getting to know new colleagues and watch their careers develop. This year honored us with another exciting meeting. While the group was small, the conversation was rich and rewarding. We had the opportunity to share the results of the HWP study, a recently concluded randomized control trial of worklife interventions. We also shared the excitement of a new AHRQ-funded study, MS squared (Minimizing Stress, Maximizing Success of the Electronic Medical Record), which will be conducted with colleagues at Stanford, Colorado (Centura Health), and the University of New Mexico. We were also delighted to hear about work currently being performed by ROC group colleagues, including women's health education programs for VA physicians and nurses.

These conversations highlight the ways in which our work informs and overlaps with the work of others, and they could not happen in a more perfect environment for collaboration

and collegiality than our national conference. Our area of research focus for almost 20 years has been provider satisfaction, stress, and burnout, and the meetings are a chance to reconnect with colleagues and share findings. These interest group meetings are a chance to share our work and passion and look for ways to work together.

Our future work will focus on challenges posed by the electronic medical record and on workflow redesign to improve the attractiveness of primary care careers. We are also excited to share the results of our new proposed partnerships with the Association of Chiefs and Leaders of General Internal Medicine and the American College of Physicians regarding physician worklife. For next year's interest group meeting, bring your passion and interest in improving careers in general internal medicine. If you've always wanted to be in a ROC group, please join us!

References

1. Schwartz MD, Linzer M, Babbott D, Divine GW, Broadhead WE. Medical student interest in internal medicine. *Ann Intern Med* 1991; 114:6-16.
2. Konrad TR, Williams ES, Linzer M, McMurray J, Pathman D, Gerrity M, Schwartz MD, Scheckler W, Van Kirk J, Rhodes E, Douglas J. Measuring physician job satisfaction in a changing workplace and a challenging environment. *Med Care* 1999; 37:1174-82.

FROM THE SOCIETY: PART II

continued from page 1

3. Linzer M, Konrad TR, Douglas J, McMurray JE, Pathman D, Williams E, et al. Managed care, time pressure and physician job satisfaction. Results from the Physician Worklife Study. *J Gen Intern Med* 2000; 15(7):441-50.
4. Williams ES, Konrad TR, Scheckler WE, Pathman DE, Linzer M, McMurray JE, Gerrity M, Schwartz M. Understanding physicians' intentions to withdraw from practice: the role of job satisfaction, job stress, mental and physical health. *Health Care Mgmt Rev* 2001; 26(1):7-19.
5. Linzer M, Manwell LB, Williams ES, Bobula JA, Brown RL, Varkey AB, Man B, McMurray JE, Maguire A, Horner-Ibler B, Schwartz MD. Working conditions in primary care: physician reactions and care quality. *Ann Intern Med* 2009; 151:28-36.
6. Varkey AB, Manwell LB, Williams ES, Ibrahim SA, Brown RL, Bobula JA, Horner-Ibler BA, Schwartz MD, Konrad TR, Wiltshire JC, Linzer M. Separate and unequal: clinics where minority and nonminority patients receive primary care. *Arch Intern Med* 2009; 169(3):243-50.

SGIM