Introduction to the Anesthesiology Medical Education Theme Issue

Alan Jay Schwartz, M.D., M.S.Ed., David J. Murray, M.D.

THIS unique Medical Education Theme Issue, first for ANESTHESIOLOGY, furthers the Journal's commitment to education and educational research. The topic areas well represented in this theme issue include (1) anesthesiologist's achievement as student learners, (2) responding to learner needs by interpreting data and developing curriculum, (3) searching for return on the investment of education through documented enhanced clinical competency, and (4) engaging the anesthesiology community in education needs and interests.

Experiential learning using modalities such as simulation is recognized as essential to medical education. In this Theme Issue, our specialty's leadership and commitment to simulation education are evident in articles that include (1) a scheme for identifying clinical performance gaps early in core-resident education, (2) application of simulation to teach and enhance performance of psychomotor skills, specifically, transesophageal echocardiography, (3) exploring anesthesiologist's communication styles during "routine" and "crisis-driven" simulation scenarios, and (4) educating faculty to provide better feedback to residents, all coupled with an Editorial to stimulate readers to ponder whether the clinical performance of anesthesiologists can be assessed and made better through the simulation setting.

Other key educational concepts are addressed in Theme Issue articles expounding upon (1) the patient safety curriculum and the need to reduce critical incidents through developing more effective approaches to patient handoffs, (2) competency-based education, a timely area of interest as milestone-defined education, has recently been mandated for all of graduate medical education and is currently being designed for anesthesiology-specific core-resident and specialty-fellow education, (3) cognitive psychology as a way to gain clarity on how anesthesiologists process information and formulate patient care decisions, (4) anesthesiology resident evaluation of their teachers as a guide to the identification of characteristics of "above-average" educators, (5) the impact of developing a curriculum about research on anesthesiologists contributing to research activities, (6) curriculum development for pain medicine, (7) understanding the implications of teaching airway management to nonanesthesiologists, (8) a historical account of the start of graduate education in anesthesiology, (9) an essay revealing the thought process of an individual choosing our specialty as a future career pathway, and (10) the current and future status of continuing medical education for anesthesiology.

The Medical Education Theme Issue experiment by ANESTHESIOLOGY is a resounding success, demonstrating that many in our ranks have a keen interest in educational research and they wish to share their findings to inform daily clinical practice and transform our practice of anesthesia patient care. Read on and absorb all that the authors have provided for your scrutiny. Read on and learn how you can become a better teacher and guide your residents and fellows to become better anesthesiologists. Read on and let your light bulbs turn on to the future education about education that you can investigate and impart to your colleagues.

Competing Interests

The authors are not supported by, nor maintain any financial interest in, any commercial activity that may be associated with the topic of this article.

Correspondence

Address correspondence to Dr. Schwartz: schwartza@email.chop.edu.

Accepted for publication October 7, 2013. From the Department of Anesthesiology and Critical Care Medicine, University of Pennsylvania, Perelman School of Medicine, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (A.J.S.); and Department of Anesthesiology, Washington University School of Medicine, St. Louis, Missouri (D.J.M.).

 Anesthesiology 2014; 120:1