

Guest Editorial: Navigating Personal and Professional Crises*Continued from previous page*

also highlights the “second victim syndrome,” where health care professionals experience emotional trauma after an adverse event, especially in high-stakes fields like ours. Studies show that inadequate support after an IOD can compromise an anesthesiologist’s ability to provide care and result in long-term psychological effects, with some considering career changes. The article advocates for systemic reforms, including the incorporation of discussions and simulations of IOD during anesthesiology training and the establishment of robust emotional and psychological support systems for both trainees and practicing anesthesiologists. By normalizing conversations around IOD and providing better resources, the field can foster a culture of resilience, where anesthesiologists are better equipped to handle not only the medical complexities but also the emotional challenges of their profession.

These two articles are followed by a very thoughtful piece titled “How to Cope When Things Go Wrong,” which explores various personal and professional strategies we can adopt to manage stress, especially after encountering poor patient outcomes. Allen N. Gustin Jr., MD, FCCP, FASA, FCCM, a critical care and palliative care anesthesiologist, shares personal experiences of how patient deaths can have a profound impact, both

mentally and physically, on their caregivers. The article stresses the importance of a supportive work environment where colleagues can offer emotional check-ins, provide early relief from clinical duties

“Despite their extensive training to manage life-threatening situations, anesthesiologists are often unprepared for the emotional aftermath of a patient’s unexpected death. The shock can shatter the sense of control and invincibility that is often found in anesthesiologists, who operate in a profession built on precision and safety.”

to process the events, and expedite quality reviews. The author points out that these steps can ease emotional burdens, especially after unanticipated outcomes.

The article also delves into the value of mindfulness meditation and self-compassion as critical tools for managing stress and emotional responses to difficult situations. Through years of practice, the author has found mindfulness meditation to be an essential part of reflection and emotional management, particularly after patient care failures. Self-compassion, though more challenging, helps counteract self-criticism and promotes emotional healing. The importance of self-care is also underscored, with the author outlining changes to improve physical health, sleep quality, and personal relationships as key to overall well-being. Additionally, the article recommends professional development in bioethics and the disclosure of adverse outcomes, which can help health care professionals better navigate difficult conversations

with patients and families. Ultimately, the message is that each individual copes with stress differently, and we all must actively work on improving emotional resilience. By addressing these elements, health care professionals can better manage their emotions and prevent burnout.

The last featured article in this special issue is very practical. In “Help, I’ve Been Sued! A Practical Guide to Dealing with a Lawsuit,” Drs. Jason Sung Chi, Aaron N. Primm, and Naileshni S. Singh provide a step-by-step overview of what happens when an anesthesiologist is faced with a malpractice lawsuit. The article summarizes the do’s and don’ts when a legal case is at hand, and the authors walk the reader through the commonly experienced steps of the legal process, including what to expect and how to do it right. ■

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Call for Nominations: ASA Award for Excellence in Research and James E. Cottrell, MD, Presidential Scholar Award

Anesthesiology is seeking nominations for the 2025 ASA Award for Excellence in Research and 2025 James E. Cottrell, MD, Presidential Scholar Award. Awards will be presented during the Celebration of Research at ANESTHESIOLOGY® 2025.

The annual ASA Award for Excellence in Research recognizes an individual for outstanding achievement in research that has or is likely to have an important

impact on the practice of anesthesiology. The individual’s work must represent a body of original, mature, and sustained contribution to the advancement of the science of anesthesiology. Nominees need not be a physician, an anesthesiologist, or a member of ASA but must be presently engaged in research related to anesthesiology, academically accomplished with peer-reviewed publications and funded research, and nominated in response to a call for nominations.

The James E. Cottrell, MD, Presidential Scholar Award recognizes colleagues who dedicate their formative careers to research. Anesthesiologists who are within 10 years of their first appointment to a department of anesthesiology, who are board-certified in their country of practice, who are ASA members, and who are clinically active in anesthesia, intensive care, or pain medicine are eligible for the award. Candidates should be nominated by

their department chair or by the ASA Committee on Research.

The deadline for award nominations is March 31, 2025. Please submit nominations or any questions regarding these awards to Managing Editor, *Anesthesiology*: managing-editor@anesthesiology.org. For further details regarding the awards, qualifications, and required materials for nomination, see pubs.asahq.org/anesthesiology/pages/awards. ■