



From the Association of Family Practice Residency Directors

## LEADING SUCCESSFUL RESIDENCY RESEARCH

How can a residency program successfully conduct research? DeHaven et al studied the answer to this question in their article, "Creating a Research Culture: What We Can Learn From Residencies That Are Successful In Research."<sup>1</sup> In a three-stage investigation, an initial telephone survey identified residencies with a successful research program. This investigation was followed by a mail survey of recent graduates from those programs, and subsequently, with an in-depth interview with the program or research director. Through this process, six "virtually unanimous characteristics" were identified for all of the successful residency research programs: program director support, time, faculty involvement in research, a research curriculum/journal club, an easily accessible research professional, and opportunities for residents to present their research. It was concluded that for residency programs to be successful in research, they must make research a priority, and it is helpful for programs to have a forum for sharing successful strategies.

The UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School Department of Family Medicine Network of Affiliated Family Practice Residency Programs in New Jersey provides one example of what DeHaven et al describe in their paper. The Network consists of seven programs: Hunterdon Medical Center Family Practice Residency, JFK Medical Center Family Practice Residency, Somerset Medical Center Family Practice Residency, UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Family Practice Residency, UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Family Practice Residency at Capital Health System, Warren Hospital Family Practice Residency, and West Jersey-Memorial Family Practice Residency at Virtua. The programs cooperate in sponsoring educational activities for their residents and faculty that would be difficult for a single program to accomplish alone. For example, this year the Network held its eleventh annual Scholarship Day at UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. Scholarship Day gives residents from each of the Network programs a forum in which to present their research projects in a supportive environment. It also gives the residencies an opportunity to share research ideas and showcase resident family practice research at the medical school. Joint research projects

have been discussed but would be difficult to organize without a Network research coordinator. Even so, the Network does provide each program with the opportunity for their residents to present their projects and a forum in which to discuss research strategies, both important activities identified by DeHaven et al for a successful research culture.

In Peter Senge's book, *The Fifth Discipline*, he states that "the leaders' task is designing the learning processes."<sup>2</sup> As residency program leaders, directors are responsible for designing and supporting the learning processes of their programs so that they can facilitate research and other scholarly activities. Without the directors' leadership and support, research will never achieve sufficient priority to allow programs to be successful in research, and residents will find it difficult to master the Accreditation Council of Graduate Medical Education competency of practice-based learning and improvement. Because we are responsible for teaching tomorrow's leaders in family medicine, it behooves us as directors to transmit to our residents the essential leadership skill of critical thinking that can come only from having a successful research curriculum.

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## References

1. DeHaven M, Wilson G, O'Connor-Kettlestrings P. Creating a research culture: what we can learn from residencies that are successful in research. *Fam Med* 1998;30:501-507.
2. Senge P. *The fifth discipline*. New York: Currency Doubleday; 1990:345.



From the North American Primary Care Research Group

## COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND DEVELOPMENT USING THE PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH MODEL

Participatory research is a collaborative model that promotes the development of critical partnerships and the application of research conclusions into the process of community development. It is a means by which the expertise of primary care researchers can produce new knowledge through developing research partnerships with the community. The knowledge, expertise, and resources of the involved community are frequently key to effective research and problem solving.

The participatory research model began as a movement for social justice in international development activities and has evolved into a tool for improving