

SGIM LAUNCHES NATIONAL EVIDENCE- BASED MEDICINE PROJECT

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In December 1998, Drs. Bill Branch and Wendy Levinson, then co-chairs of the Clinician-Educator Task Force of the SGIM Education Committee, obtained a \$50,000 grant from the Merck Foundation to develop a plan to train clinicians in the principles of Evidence-Based Medicine (EBM) and promote the use of EBM in day-to-day clinical practice. The Education Committee identified leaders in the EBM movement and asked them to form a working group to develop this plan for SGIM. Recently, the Merck Foundation generously agreed to fund phase II, the SGIM National Evidence-Based Medicine Project, at \$150,000 per year for 2 years.

Over the past year, meetings and conference calls of the SGIM EBM Working Group have been characterized by vigorous discussions about the problems clinicians encounter in answering questions that arise in their clinical practice, how much a practicing clinician can be expected to learn about searching for evidence, and how best to develop a cadre of clinicians who could both practice and teach EBM. We decided upon two project goals: 1) to provide resources and training to clinicians so that they can efficiently answer clinical questions using evidence-based resources, and 2) to assist educators in becoming effective practitioners and teachers of EBM so that they may serve as role models for trainees.

The Working Group is developing a 1-day workshop, "Learning How to Prac-

tice EBM: Understanding and Using Evidence-Based Resources," to enhance the ability of clinicians to use evidence-based resources (e.g., Best Evidence) to answer clinical questions. We are writing a series of clinical cases addressing diagnosis, therapy, and overviews. The workshop will focus on asking clinical questions related to the cases; searching evidence-based resources; understanding the presentation of results from studies about therapy, diagnosis, and overviews; and applying the results to patients. The workshop will be taught in small groups of approximately eight participants with two tutors per group. All discussions will be case-based. Participants will work through several cases after the workshop under the guidance of their tutors. These cases will be posted on the SGIM website, and participants will communicate their answers to others in their group using conferencing software.

The workshop and follow-up web-based case discussion will be piloted with members of SGIM and the National Association of Inpatient Physicians (NAIP). Members of these organizations have different work characteristics: most SGIM members are clinician-educators while most NAIP members are clinicians. The workshop will be offered as a pre-course at the SGIM Midwest Regional Meeting and the NAIP Southeast Regional Meeting. Both workshops will occur on September 21, 2000. Each workshop will ac-

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commodate 24 physicians for a total of 48 physicians participating in the pilot. Formative and summative evaluations of the workshop will be done.

Phase II of this project includes five components:

1. Develop evidence-based resources for SGIM members and course participants that are easy to access and use.
2. Enhance the ability of clinicians to use evidence-based resources to answer clinical questions encountered in day-to-day practice ("putting evidence-based medicine into practice"). This is essentially the workshop described above.
3. Enhance the ability of educators and some clinicians to critically appraise medical literature. Another one-day course is envisioned, similar to that in component 2, where emphasis is on validity, results interpretation, and application of articles focusing, again, on diagnosis, therapy, and overviews.
4. Enhance the ability of educators to teach evidence-based medicine including the critical appraisal of medical literature. This will be a 3–5 day course focusing on diagnosis, therapy, prognosis, harm, and overviews so participants will be able to 1) practice EBM and 2) teach EBM as outlined in components 2 and 3. This component will be piloted by the ACP-NY/New York Academy of Medicine EBM Working Group. The upcoming series of *JGIM* articles, "Tips for Teaching Evidence-Based Medicine," will be integrated into the course. This workshop will be an important resource for the dissemination of the overall project. The teaching EBM workshop will serve as the "train the trainer" workshop for individuals facilitating any of the project workshops and as a faculty development resource for residency training programs and medical schools.
5. Provide CME credit to clinicians for using evidence-based resources to answer clinical questions. We envision incorporating in the SGIM

website a secured area where member can record clinical questions and proceed to answer those questions using evidence-based resources.

Providing CME credit should positively reinforce the use of evidence-based resources to answer clinical questions and, hopefully, increase the proportion of clinical questions that are answered by clinicians.

seems to be exponential rates, while there continues to be a serious time gap between research discoveries and their integration into routine clinical practice. SGIM is now poised to take the lead in faculty development for internists in this area, hopefully resulting in quicker translation of scientifically sound evidence into practice and a better understanding, for



Members of the SGIM-EBM working group explore ways to make evidence-based resources accessible on the internet (www.sgim.org). Seated clockwise from the computer are Mark Wilson, David Karlson (SGIM's Executive Director), Rosanne Leipzig (Group Leader), and Mark Williams. Avery Hart and Cheryl Walters are standing.

Once all three workshops have been developed and piloted, the EBM Working Group and the Council will consider whether SGIM should establish two to three regional coordinating centers for EBM workshops. Studies of the impact of workshops on clinicians' behavior in their day-to-day practice and patient outcomes also will be considered.

EBM is designed to facilitate access to and recognition of clinically important research and to enhance the ability of practitioners to judge the value of this research in the care of individual patients. The volume of published medical research is increasing at what

both doctors and our patients, that all evidence is not created equal.

The members of the EBM Working Group are Martha S. Gerrity, MD, MPH, PhD, Oregon Health Sciences University, Avery S. Hart, MD, Rush Medical College, Rosanne M. Leipzig, MD, Mt. Sinai School of Medicine, Catherine R. Lucey, MD, Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, Cheryl Walters, MD, Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, Mark V. Williams, MD, Emory University Medical School, Mark C. Wilson, MD, MPH, Wake Forest University, and David Karlson, PhD, Executive Director, SGIM. **SGIM**