**Research is a Team Sport**

**ABSTRACT:**

Research is a team sport. Few researchers work alone. The image of a lone (mad) scientist hiding away in a spooky castle is the stuff of fiction. Research is give-and-take. We improve our own work by reading about other researchers’ methodologies, findings, and experiences. When we finish a project, we publish or present our findings and others learn from us. In recent years, the pressure to do research has increased. Updated ACGME requirements have raised the expectations that family medicine faculty will be involved in research and scholarly activity. How do we make this happen? Begin with the assumption that research is a team sport, and find collaborators to share the workload. Reach across residency programs; this has many advantages, with larger sample sizes, potential “control practices” for intervention studies, increased creativity, and the joy of working with your friends. This workshop is designed to connect you to like-minded peers to consider future research collaborations. Participants will: determine areas of research interest among behavioral science educators; identify peers with similar interests; and to initiate research collaborations for future studies. Workshop leaders will involve all participants in a brainstorming activity that generates multiple areas for research. Participants will then divide into discussion groups based on research topics. Participants will get acquainted, then start the process of planning a research project based on their mutual area of interest. By the end of the workshop, participants will have potential new research collaborators and a strategy for pursuing a new research question.

**NARRATIVE:**

Research is a team sport. Few researchers work alone. The image of a lone (mad) scientist hiding away in a spooky castle is the stuff of fiction. Most research publications have multiple authors who bring unique knowledge, experience and skills to the research team. Carole Bland and colleagues identified the keys to research success years ago; many of their recommendations included people-resources (1986, 1992). Successful researchers have mentors and are surrounded by peers who value research. They recruit specialized assistance for tasks such as subject enrollment, data collection and entry, and statistics. They are socialized to value scholarship, and they are successful at professional networking.

Interactions with other researchers predicts success. All good research is built on the shoulders of previous researchers. And, all good researchers share their findings with each other. Research is give-and-take, with individuals improving their own work by learning from others’ methodologies, findings, and experiences. This is why we write. This is why we present our findings at regional and national conferences. Our professional societies are learning communities.

Updated ACGME requirements have raised the expectations that family medicine residency faculty will be involved in research and scholarly activity. “Faculty must establish and maintain an environment of inquiry and scholarship with an active research component.” Some faculty (but not everyone) in each program must have grant funding, publications, peer-reviewed presentations, and membership on national committees. (ACGME, 2018) How can we make this happen in our busy residency programs?

Begin with the assumption that research is a team sport. We can do research in collaboration with residency colleagues or in a research network. We can even do research in collaboration with other behavioral science faculty we meet at the Forum! Collaborating across residency programs can have many advantages, with larger sample sizes, potential “control practices” for intervention studies, increased creativity, and the joy of working with your friends. The purpose of this workshop is to connect you to like-minded peers to consider future research collaborations.

Aims:

* to identify areas of research interest among behavioral science educators;
* to identify peers with similar interests; and
* to initiate research collaborations for future studies.

The leaders will involve all participants in a brainstorming activity that generates multiple areas for research. Participants will then divide into discussion groups based on their favorite research ideas. Participants will get acquainted, then start the process of planning a research project based on their mutual area of interest. By the end of the workshop, participants will have potential new research collaborators and a strategy for pursuing a new research question.

**TIME LINE:**

10 minutes: Introduction

30 minutes: Brainstorming

All participants will write exactly 3 research ideas on sticky notes. This process is very democratic, in that all participants – even quiet ones - have equal “voice.” Next, participants will post all ideas on a wall, then sort them into clusters. When sorting is completed, participants will name the cluster, identifying the similarities of these ideas.

10 minutes: Re-group and get acquainted

Each cluster now represents an area of research interest. Leaders will invite participants to identify the cluster that interests them the most, and to gather into discussion groups to address that issue. Groups will start with introductions and consider what resources, skills or experience each brings to the project. (Even brand-new researchers can bring resources such as patient populations or student assistants).

30 minutes: Research Project Planning

Workshop leaders will provide a worksheet to guide participants in the initial stages of planning a research project. Who will you study? What outcomes would you study? What things predict those outcomes? How would you measure those things? Do you need a comparison group? What is your initial hypothesis? What search terms would you use to find relevant literature?

10 minutes: Wrap up

**RESOURCES**

Research Minutes (mini lessons re: research):

* Writing Hypotheses;
* Research Roadmap;
* Research Design

Worksheet for Planning a Study

Sign in sheet with contact information for future collaborations

**REFERENCES**

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