

The RAP Sheet

Newsletter of the Research Association of Practices

Volume 7, No.1 Spring 2003

Join Us for an Open Forum on: Local Family Practice Development & Research Opportunities

Knowledge is power. It is time to increase our ability to generate and share knowledge about health and health care from the perspective of the front lines of family practice.

The Board of Directors of the Research Association of Practices (RAP) invites you to dinner and discussion of family practice research and development opportunities in Northeast Ohio. This open meeting will be held at 6:30 pm on Thursday, May 29 at Sammy's Restaurant in downtown Cleveland overlooking the River. Our purpose is to identify pressing local problems in family practice, and opportunities for family practices to work together to solve them. Dinner is free of charge.

To-date, much of the research in the RAP network has focused on the goal of increasing understanding of family practice and advancing

certain aspects of practice. We've worked toward that goal by collecting new data on family practices and, most recently, by analyzing the existing data. Now, however, is an ideal time for our network to undertake new collaborative efforts. With the launch of the Practice-to-Practice website (see article, page 2), we have an easy mechanism to share ideas. Changes in the CWRU medical school present new opportunities for collaboration. With the strain that the current reimbursement system, malpractice crisis, the costs of HIPAA compliance and practice staff¹ and patient^{2,3} turnover are creating for many practices, there is an important need to learn from each other and to generate new knowledge. The CWRU Department of Family Medicine Research Division will provide communication support for pursuit

of the next steps that we identify, and will support research that is necessary for this development.

If you plan to come, please fax the RSVP form on the back of this newsletter by **Tuesday, May 20**, so that we may fax you a map and directions. Feel free to contact Kurt Stange at (216) 368-6297 (direct) or kcs@po.cwru.edu to suggest agenda items.

1. Ruhe MC, Goodwin MA, Stange KC. *Physician and staff turnover in primary care practices; (Manuscript in preparation) 2003.*
2. Flocke SA, Stange KC, Zyzanski SJ. The impact of insurance type and forced discontinuity on the delivery of primary care. *J Fam Pract.* 1997;45:129-135.
3. Kahana E, Stange KC, Meehan R, Raff L. Forced disruption in continuity of primary care: The patients' perspective. *Sociological Focus.* 1997;30:172-182. ❖

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Practice to Practice Website Launched

Planning and development are completed and the Practice to Practice website is now available to facilitate communication and sharing among primary care practices. The website is a no-cost resource for Northeast Ohio family practices.

The website includes an interactive forum called "Let's Talk." This discussion group allows family practices to pose questions, share ideas and suggest solutions about day-to-day practice. All aspects of practice, including clinical, management, and administration, are open to discussion. The website also features two opportunities to contribute to the body of knowledge in primary care. In "Quarterly Question" a relevant question from the practice discussion forum is posed to all members. The brief responses to the questions are

tabulated and reported quarterly. In "Rapid Research" participants answer a few brief questions about a small number of patients. Aggregate results will be posted on the website for new insights into primary care practice. Please "Login" and join other primary care practices utilizing this interactive forum for sharing information.

Access to the website is available by the URL address: <http://cme.cwru.edu/ptop/>. The public information section is open to everyone. To gain access to the member's interactive section, log in using the green "Login" navigation bar; non-members must first click on "Become a Member" and follow the directions.

A letter introducing the website was mailed to family practice physicians

in Northeast Ohio in late March. Included in the letter was a unique "Login" code to gain access to the member's interactive section. Questions about the website can be emailed to Sharon Weyer, MSN, RN, NP-C at ptop@cwru.edu.

Sponsorship for the website is provided by the Research Association of Practices (RAP), a regional practice-based research network, with support from the Case Western Reserve University Department of Family Medicine and office of Continuing Medical Education. RAP seeks to understand and improve family practice by conducting research that enhances the practice of its members while contributing to the knowledge base of primary care. ❖

New Primary Care Research Journal is Launched

The *Annals of Family Medicine*, the new primary care research journal sponsored by six family practice organizations, will publish its inaugural issue at the end of May. The first issue will be mailed to members of the sponsoring organizations (AAFP, ABFP, STFM, ADFM, AFPRD, and NAPCRG). Subsequent issues will be available by subscription free of charge. The full text online version will be available free to all at <http://www.AnnFamMed.org>.

The *Annals* features original research, methodology, theory, essays, selected systematic reviews, and editorials. According to Kurt C. Stange, MD, PhD, *Annals* editor and RAP steward, "The first issue reflects the diversity and growing strength of the primary care re-

search community in generating new knowledge on important topics in health and primary care."

Dr. Stange encourages RAP members to take an active role in the *Annals* as authors and as peer reviewers, who "provide the constructive feedback that is the backbone of a scientific journal." Information for authors and a reviewer registration form are available at www.AnnFamMed.org.

RAP members are also encouraged to participate in the online discussions that will accompany each *Annals* article. These discussions will be synthesized in a regular editorial feature called On-TRACK (Topical Response to the *Annals* Community of Knowledge).



Something to Crow About: RAP Researchers Keep Up the Quality Research

Below is an abridged list of recent publications detailing the network research of RAP members. RAP members are encouraged to submit reprints or citations detailing their collaborative work for recognition on these pages. For further information, contact the RAP office at 216-368-0837 or rsh@po.cwru.edu. ❖



Blankfield RP, Goodwin MA, Jaen CR, Stange KC. **Addressing the unique challenges of inner city practice: A direct observation study of inner city, rural and suburban family practices.** *J Urban Health* 79 (2): 173-85, 2002.

Inner-city family physicians in northeast Ohio see a more challenging patient population than their rural and suburban counterparts and have more complex outpatient office visits. These findings have implications for health system organization and for the reimbursement and recruitment of physicians in medically underserved inner-city areas.

Bloom HR, Zyzanski SJ, Kelley L, Tapolyai A, Stange KC. **Clinical judgment predicts culture results in upper respiratory tract infections.** *J Am Board Fam Pract* 15 (2): 93-100, 2002.

Infection with a potentially pathogenic bacteria is difficult to determine solely by clinical signs and symptoms, but clinical judgment by the family physician/lead author on the study is associated with positive culture results. The effect of selective treatment of upper respiratory tract infection based on clinical signs and symptoms and patient and family culture results remains to be determined, but using clinical judgment could result in more selective antibiotic use than found in current practice patterns.

Eaton C, Goodwin M, Stange K. **Direct observation of nutrition counseling in community family practice.** *Am J Prev Med* 23 (3): 174, 2002.

Dietary changes have great potential to reduce morbidity and mortality. Family physicians focus nutrition counseling on high-risk patients which may increase its impact.

Fiscella K, Goodwin MA, Stange KC. **Does patient educational level affect office visits to family physicians?** *J Natl Med Assoc* 94 (3): 157-65, 2002.

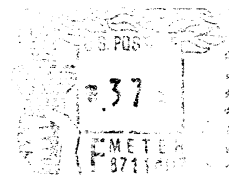
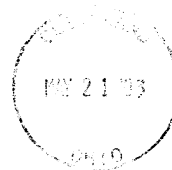
Patient socioeconomic status (assessed by patients' education level) has a relatively small, but potentially important, effect on the outpatient delivery of primary care.

Kikano GE, Snyder CW, Callahan EJ, Goodwin MA, Stange KC. **A comparison of ambulatory services for patients with managed care and fee-for-service insurance.** *Am J Manag Care* 8 (2): 181-6, 2002.

In a healthcare market with moderate managed care penetration in which the same physicians see patients with different types of insurance, the process of care is affected little by type of insurance coverage. Patient satisfaction and time use during visits is comparable for patients with fee-for-service and preferred provider organization insurance.



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*RAP Open Forum / Buffet Dinner, May 29th, 2003 at 6:30 p.m.
Fax-Back Reply*

Please fax this form to the attention of Sara Cechner, fax number 216-368-4348. All RSVPs must be received by **Tuesday, May 20.**

- Location: Sammy's Restaurant in downtown Cleveland. Detailed directions will be faxed upon RSVP.

Number Attending: _____

Comments, including any special dietary needs/
preferences:

Name (if different from label above)

Address (if different from label above)

Phone Fax

Email