Roth Rounds
It’s All About Impact!

There are many paths to greatness in our profession. Some physiatrists have achieved “greatness” through their contributions in research, not only by publishing articles in the medical literature, but also through the creative design and development of new techniques, technologies and devices. It is important to recognize that it is the impact and significance of these papers, devices, and other products that matter, rather than the quantity of publications, patents or products.

Many other physiatrist practitioners and leaders have made their mark through education, which probably represents the most common form of expression or “academic” interest that is pursued by people in our specialty. In view of the relatively young nature of our field, this emphasis on education is expected and desirable. We need excellent educators in high quality training programs in order to insure that competent and compassionate practitioners and creative and capable researchers continue to be produced in the future. Educators also help to insure that physicians who are not in our specialty have an awareness of what we do.

Some specialists in our field had their impact through the creation or development of new subspecialty areas. In doing so, they opened the door for many new patients to receive the benefits of the expertise and philosophy that physiatrists bring to care practices; these are patients who might not otherwise have been treated by professionals in our specialty. Doing this also creates novel opportunities for physicians entering PM&R.

A number of physiatrists exert their impact by assuming leadership positions – in departments, programs, residencies, institutions, hospitals, units, and specialty societies. The role of influencing a larger group can be an exciting but daunting task. It forces one to think about and take responsibility for the effects of their activities that extend beyond themselves as individuals.

And, most of us exert our impact through our daily interactions with patients. We improve the quality of life of the patients we see, one patient at a time. Collectively, this impact may be the most significant of them all. Sometimes this is done by performing targeted procedures, sometimes by making specific therapeutic recommendations, and sometimes by stating a kind word or two to a patient or family. In all of these encounters, we work to make a difference in the lives of our patients.

While we are proud of the high profile research findings and new developments that have emanated from our group, and we believe that they will change practices favorably for many patients, we also appreciate the tremendous contribution of each physician, clinician, scientist, and others to the quality of life, quality of care, and quality of caring, of individual patients. Each of these contributions makes a difference for our patients, and more broadly, for our specialty.

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I was struck by the number of Resident Alumni who responded to the last “Roth Rounds” article about soliciting narratives from patients. I deeply appreciate the dialog that was initiated after that article was published. More than anything, this reflects the great extent to which our alumni value their role in listening to our patients, understanding our patients’ experiences, and allowing patients to express themselves as a useful and therapeutic technique. In these conversations, there also was often the expression by many physicians of a level of sadness, frustration, and dissatisfaction with many of the challenges they faced while attempting to carry out these meaningful activities in context of the present health care economic environment and in their practices. Listening, understanding, and encouraging expression take time. The pressure to see more patients and perform more procedures in shorter periods of time can be anathema to this philosophy.

The point in discussing this is that taking the time to understand our patients has a high impact as well. Even when we may not recognize it, and even if the patient does not tell us explicitly, it is often the case that our seemingly minor “offhand comments,” facial expressions, formal recommendations, and occasional creative solutions to complicated patient problems, make a bigger difference for them than we might see. We should never forget this.

Please feel free to continue the dialog any time!

“Fools will be fools,
And wise will be wise.
But I will look this world
Straight in the eyes,
I believe in a better way…”
— Ben Harper

Warmly,
Elliot J. Roth, MD (’85)
The Paul B. Magnuson Professor and Chairman
PM&R, NUFSM
ejr@northwestern.edu

Alumnae to be Team Physician for U.S. Paralympic Track & Field Team

Suzy Kim, MD (’04) will serve as the team physician for the U.S. Paralympic Track and Field Team starting with coverage for the National Championships in June in Miramar, Florida. Dr. Kim will lead the medical staff, including a chiropractor, physical therapist and athletic trainers to provide sports medicine coverage at training camps and events leading to the Track and Field World Championships in New Zealand in January 2011. These athletes will train in several camps at the Olympic Training Center in Chula Vista, California with high goals for the Paralympic Games in London England in 2012. Prior to this appointment, Dr. Kim served as a volunteer team physician for the U.S. Paracycling Team. She hopes to incorporate her research on measuring trunk and postural control following spinal cord injury with core strengthening for disabled athletes and general fitness. Dr. Kim stated, “I am humbled to work with such high caliber athletes who have not allowed their amputations, paralysis, or visual impairments to limit their success as world class athletes.”

In Memoriam

Paula Sundance, MD (’89)

The RIC/NJ Alumni Association was saddened recently when we were told that Dr. Paula Sundance passed away last December, after a long illness. At the time of her passing, Paula was on staff at Paradigm Medical Corporation, in Sebastopol, California. Prior to joining Paradigm, Paula had a distinguished career as the director of Kaiser’s North California rehabilitation department.

Paula was a very committed and energetic clinician, dedicated to her patients and to the practice of medicine. She was also a leading scientist in rehabilitation and in particular the areas of brain injury, and she co-authored a number of early academic papers in this area.

Dr. Nathan Cope, Paradigm’s CMO, in Concord, California, tells us that Paula was one of the first physicians to become a Paradigm Medical Director and for some time during its formative years, served as the Associate Chief Medical Officer. As such, she was instrumental in creating Paradigm and helping to establish it as the pinnacle of leadership in care for catastrophically injured individuals. Dr. Cope says that Paula was an ardent believer in the value that Paradigm brought to severely challenged injured individuals, and he firmly believes the company might not have survived its early years without her insights and steadfast support.

Everyone at Paradigm who had interaction with Paula was appreciative of her time, expertise and devotion. Paradigm awarded her a special distinguished contributor award last year, which was to be presented at Paradigm’s annual Holiday event, but unfortunately she didn’t have the chance to publically receive the acclaim and gratitude she so richly deserved. Dr. Cope says he considered Paula a partner in Paradigm’s development and success.

At Paula’s request, there was no funeral or memorial service.
I have been working with South Dakota Public Broadcasting on a medical television series named “On Call.” The purpose of the program is to provide general medical discussions on topics that affect health and wellness throughout the life cycle. Examples of topics discussed are disability, caring for the elderly, hearing loss, and Parkinson’s Disease. These topics are discussed by a panel of experts on public television weekly and then a web photo is posted as a visual interpretation of the topic under review. I have been doing this photography now for approximately five years. The work was profiled in Harvard Magazine. A photography book of the compiled photos and essays was published which won a publishing award for health literature. My specific interest in this project was in giving patients, their families, and their loved ones a different and visual way to format information from medical providers. My hope is that the photography can allow the viewers improved intellectual and emotional access to difficult medical conversations and topics.

I have also had a museum exhibit of my sports photography of women’s roller derby. Roller derby is one of the few sports largely owned and controlled by women. Roller derby is also one of the few women’s contact sports. I did a large photographic series of the Sioux Falls Roller Dollz and will be having another exhibit of my sports photography soon. I am interested in the role of the abstract in conveying movement and conflict, and this is part of that visual exploration.

Finally, I currently have an exhibit called The Genesis Project on display. I have created approximately 100 images of Genesis through Deuteronomy using the original Colorforms™ toy. The Colorforms™ toy was one of the first mass-produced children’s toys with over one billion of the sets sold. I used this commonly available art medium to compose the images which were then photographed for documentation and display. This artwork has had two separate solo exhibits to this point.

Those of you who would like to see examples of my photography, please visit my website at judithpetersumphotography.com.

As for my practice, I am practicing clinical rehabilitation medicine. I am as convinced as ever that when all medical physicians practice at their best, they become rehab doctors!

I am really honored that Dr. Roth asked me to give you all this alumni update and hope that everyone is doing well.

Alumni Update by Judith R. Peterson, MD

ISPO 2010 World Congress Report

Held every 3 years, the 2010 World Congress of the International Society for Prosthetics and Orthotics was held in Leipzig, Germany, May 10-15, 2010. This year’s Congress attracted a record number of 2,600 participants from over 108 countries, along with 21,200 visitors attending the trade fair held in parallel to the Congress.

The Center for International Rehabilitation-Yeongchi Wu International Education Award was established in 2004. Presenting on the last day of the Congress, the award recognizes P&O professionals who have contributed to developing the field in low-income areas. This year, the award trophy and $1,000 prize went to Ping Yang, from China for her paper on “The Rehabilitation of a Chinese Hemicorporectomy Amputee after Pelvic Trauma,” in which she demonstrated how the work of the rehabilitation team prepared for this specific case was essential in helping the patient live independently in society.

Laura Miller, from the RIC Neural Engineering Center for Artificial Limbs, was awarded a Best Paper Prize for her paper on “Targeted Reinnervation — Surgical Outcome of 30 Patients,” which was recognized as best scientific work.

Yeongchi Wu MD, (’75), NU Department of PM&R, also received a Best Paper Prize for his work entitled “CIR TF Casting System for Making Transfemoral Sockets” which was recognized as best technical innovation.

The next ISPO World Congress 2013 will be held in Hyderabad, India, February 4-7, 2013.
Alumni Update

Stephen Bloom, DO (’94)
Stephen and Betsy have 2 children; daughter Alison (born at NMH-Prentice during Steve's PGY-2 year) is graduating from East Grand Rapids High School and plans to attend University of Michigan. Stephen was elected Chief-of-Staff of Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation Hospital in June 2010, continues to play drums for the popular band “Mid-Life Crisis” which just released their second album, “It's Always Something” (www.mlcband.com).

Jaclyn (’98) and Greg (’99) Arends, MDs
Live in Niwot, Colorado but commute daily to their different practices: Jackie to Boulder and Greg to Lafayette. They have 1 daughter, Elise Song.

William Sullivan, MD (’97)
Bill is Associate Professor, Director of Medical Student Education, and Clinical Block Director Musculoskeletal Block, for the Dept. of PM&R at the University of Colorado-Denver School of Medicine. He is also PM&R Site Director for the ACGME Pain Medicine Fellowship.
Bill’s wife Krista is back full-time as a pharmacist. She participated this year in her first marathon (San Diego) for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. Daughter Aran is 10 and finished 4th grade this year. Aran is already thinking about college and wants it to be in California where it’s warm (but doesn’t want the family to move there). Son Liam is 8 and just finished 2nd grade. He loves any baseball team that rivals his dad’s Detroit team. He gave up skiing and started snowboarding with his sister and dad. Dog Wrigley (sorry Sox-fans!) is a yellow lab, almost 3.

Kenneth Bunch, MD (’06)
On staff at Texas Orthopedics in Austin, practicing Interventional Spine, Sports & Electrodiagnostic Medicine. He is married to Tina Bunch, MD, a rheumatologist. They have 2 daughters: Alina, 3 years old, and Kira, 18 months.

Brad (’04) and Susan (’05) Sorosky, MDs
Are the staff physicians at Desert Spine & Sports in Phoenix, Arizona. Both were chosen as Phoenix Magazine’s ‘Top Docs’ in PM&R and Pain Management in 2010. They have 2 children.

Thomas Boetel, MD (’04)
Tom is with Sanford Health’s PM&R Specialists, in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. He and wife, Kerry, have 4 daughters. Their fourth daughter, Shay Margaret, was born this year in April.

Jerod Cottrill, DO (’03)
Lives in Portland, Oregon and works at Rebound, the premier orthopedic and neurological clinic in the Portland/ Vancouver (WA) metropolitan area. He serves as one of the team physicians caring for the Portland Trailblazers and is in the medical pool for the US Ski Team, working regularly with the US Adaptive Program when they train at Mt. Hood. Jerod and wife Judy have 2 children.

Brian Casazza, MD (’95)
Brian's practice is at the Athens Regional Medical Center in Athens, Georgia, where he serves as Medical Director of their Spine Institute. He and wife Nancy moved to Athens after spending 12 years in spine practice in the Charlottesville, Virginia area.

Claude Borowsky, MD (’97)
Practices in Springfield, Massachusetts, and lives in Southampton. He recently resigned as Medical Director of Mercy Medical Center's Pain Program, after 7 years in that position.

SkyRise Chicago 2010

The Second Annual SkyRise Chicago, our nation’s highest indoor stair climb, will be held on Sunday, November 14, 2010 at the Willis Tower (former Sears Tower) to benefit RIC. Registration for the event is now open. Go to www.skyrisechicago.org to register to climb or hand-cycle, donate to others who are participating, or register to be a virtual climber and just help raise funds for RIC. Last year’s event attracted 1,700 participants from 31 states and 5 countries, and raised $650,000.00 in support of RIC.

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