Correspondence

Grow your own: strategies to develop anesthesia researchers

To the Editor:
How do we encourage bright, inquisitive residents to consider career paths in anesthesia research? Evidence would suggest that research in anesthesia is on the decline. The number of grants awarded by national funding agencies to departments of anesthesia is low compared to other specialties.[1] To date, only one anesthesia resident in Canada has completed the Clinical Investigator Program (CIP) of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons. To encourage resident participation in research, two initiatives were undertaken at the Department of Anesthesia, University of Toronto.

A Research Orientation Day was established for first and second year anesthesia residents. The objectives of the Orientation |Day were to expose trainees to the breadth of research in progress at the university, but of equal importance, to discuss career paths and lifestyles of clinician-scientists. The itinerary for the Orientation Day consisted of short presentations by established investigators followed by visits to laboratories and research institutes. Following the 2004 Research Orientation Day, an anonymous survey was performed to examine residents' attitudes towards research (Table). Fifteen of the 26 (58%) participants completed the survey. While only 27% of the residents were interested in research before the orientation, 60% expressed an interest in pursuing studies after the orientation. All responders perceived the day to be of great value. The initial lack of interest in research is not surprising given the limited and sporadic exposure to investigators during clinical rotations. The Orientation Day required minimal effort to organize and introduced the idea of a research career early in the trainees' education.

The second initiative was the establishment of two positions for residency candidates committed to the CIP (www.carms.ca/jsp/program.jsp?path=../program_new/504912). Residents in this stream will complete all the rotations required by the Royal College for clinical training in anesthesia. In addition, at the end of the second year of residency, they would enroll in the CIP and concomitantly pursue a Master's or PhD degree. This could be in either basic and clinical sciences, clinical epidemiology, medical education or health administration. Enrollment in the CIP would lengthen the residency by at least one year, but would result in dual certification as a Specialist Anesthesiologist and Clinician Investigator with the Royal College. This program is designed to prepare residents to become independent clinician-scientists.

TABLE Survey results

Day		*Before Research Orientation Day (n = 15)*	*After Research Orientation (n = 15)*
Pursuing research	Interested	4	9
	Undecided	11	6
	Not interested	0	0
Pursuing graduate degree (Master's or PhD)	Interested	1	1
	Undecided	4	8
	Not interested	10	6

We hope these initiatives will expand the knowledge base of the specialty and will ultimately lead to improved patient care.

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Reference

1 *Orser BA, Miller DR*. New opportunities for anesthesia research in Canada. Can J Anesth 2002; 49: 895–9.

Preventing pain on injection of rocuronium: two doses of dexmedetomidine

To the Editor:
Dexmedetomidine is an α_2 adrenoreceptor agonist with supraspinal, spinal, and peripheral actions. Alpha$_2$ receptors are located on blood vessels where they inhibit norepinephrine release.[1] We recently conducted a study to determine the efficacy of dexmedetomidine in decreasing pain due to injection of rocuronium.