Permanente Medicine is a proactive, innovative, evidence-based, population-care practice, practiced by a multispecialty group, using an electronic health and medical record, and focused on patient relationships and outcomes.

The Permanente Journal

Mission: The Permanente Journal is published for physicians, practitioners, and nurses to create and to deliver superior health care through the principles and benefits of Permanente Medicine.

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93 BOOK REVIEWS
95 CME EVALUATION FORM

On the cover: “Moebius Ring” by Gloria Yu, MD, A Graduate from Utah raspberry alabaster. This is Dr Yu’s first piece. Dr Yu is a retired pathologist from Fremont Medical Center.

ORIGINAL ARTICLES

4. Computed Tomographic Angiography in Patients Evaluated for Acute Pulmonary Embolism with Low Serum D-Dimer Levels: A Prospective Study.

11. Reducing Collision Between Family Members and Clinicians of Patients Referred to the Palliative Care Team.


34. Service Score Segmentation of Diverse Populations to Improve Patient and Physician Satisfaction—A Multicase Quality Improvement Study.

The changing demographic picture in California creates a complex challenge for physicians, facilities, and an organization. In response, one strategy is a service improvement program, with demonstrated successful outcomes that combine patient satisfaction “service scores,” data segmentation by ethnicity, sex and age, and data analysis, which recognizes the demographic subsets at which physicians excel and are weak. Five case examples are described, including clinicians interacting with Chinese patients, African-American patients, and young females, and two department level interventions in urology and internal medicine.

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CASE STUDIES

42 Peripartum Cardiomyopathy: Case Reports. Mary Wang, MD
Postpartum cardiomyopathy is a dilated cardiomyopathy defined as systolic cardiac heart failure in the last month of pregnancy or within five months of delivery. The symptoms that differentiate it from those of normal pregnancy and postpartum are chest pain, dyspnea on exertion, rales, and cough. This disorder carries a high mortality rate.

46 Gastric Antral Vascular Ectasia (Watermelon Stomach)—An Enigmatic and Often-Overlooked Cause of Gastrointestinal Bleeding in the Elderly. Hien Nguyen, MD; Connie Le, MD; Hanh Nguyen, MD
Gastric Antral Vascular Ectasia (GAVE) syndrome is characterized endoscopically by “watermelon stripes.” Without cirrhosis, patients are 71% female, average age 73, presenting with occult blood loss leading to transfusion-dependent chronic iron-deficiency anemia, severe acute upper gastrointestinal bleeding, and nondescript abdominal pain.

CLINICAL MEDICINE

50 The B-SMART Appropriate Medication-Use Process: A Guide for Clinicians to Help Patients—Part 2: Adherence, Relationships, and Triage. Elizabeth Oyekan, PharmD, FCSHP; Ananda Nimalasure, MD; John Martin, MD; Ron Scott, MD; James Dufl, MD; Kelley Green, RN, PhD
Part 2 of the B-SMART process—a guide to appropriate medication use—describes: adherence tools and reminders, relationships, and triage. Elements include: involving patients in the decision making, simplifying dosage regimens, education about the medication, self-management training, ongoing reinforcement and motivation, and positive relationships.

55 Image Diagnosis: Interesting Computed Tomography Scans from the Emergency Department. Gus M Carmel, MD, FACEP; FAAEM
Three examples of intracranial hemorrhage are described and visualized on computed tomography scans: subdural, subarachnoid, and intraparenchymal hemorrhage.

Corridor Consult

56 What Do I Do with My Morbidly Obese Patient? A Detailed Case Study of Bariatric Surgery in Kaiser Permanente Southern California. Pooya Shafipour, MS, MD; Jack C Der-Sarkissian, MD; Fadi N Hendee, MD; Karen J Coleman, MS, PhD
Most bariatric surgery studies have shown excellent weight-loss rates for up to two years after surgery, and that most patients maintain the loss for up to ten years. This article summarizes the bariatric surgery process through a detailed case study of how Kaiser Permanente Southern California screens, prepares, and follows patients.

64 A Practical Drug Allergy Update: What You Need to Know About Drug Allergies But Did Not Learn in Medical School. Eric Macy, MD, MS
The majority of adverse drug reactions are nonallergic. Of 275 individuals who reported ten or more drug “allergies,” 92% were women (mean age 67 years), and 60% had a diagnosis of depression or serious mental illness. The single most important thing that clinicians can do is not to use antibiotics outside the setting of bacterial infections.

COMMENTARY

68 No Respect: Research in Quality, Safety, and Process Improvement. Ilan S Rubinfeld, MD, MBA; H Mathilda Horst, MD
The need for good quality and safety research has never been more imperative, but even as it is encouraged it is suppressed through institutional bias and inertia. This commentary explores the implications of the application of pure science standards at the sharp end of clinical practice, where the down-and-dirty street-level improvement work happens.

72 Health Care Delivery Performance: Service, Outcomes, and Resource Stewardship. Michelle Cowing, PhD; Carrie M Davino-Ramaya, MD; Krishnan Ramaya, PhD; Joseph Szmerovskiy, PhD
As competition intensifies within the health care industry, patient satisfaction and service quality are providing the evidentiary basis for patient outcomes. We propose a conceptual model of three interrelated areas—service, health outcomes, and resource stewardship—all affected by the clinician-patient relationship, and from the perspectives of the health care organization, clinician, and patient, to define a more comprehensive measure of health care delivery performance.

79 Patient-Physician Language Concordance: A Strategy for Meeting the Needs of Spanish-SpeakingPatients in Primary Care. Michael H Kanter, MD; Karyn M Abrams, MBA; Maria R Carrasco, MD; Nancy H Spiegel; Ralph S Vogel, PhD; Karen J Coleman, PhD
Patients need to communicate with a language-concordant physician, not simply an interpreter, to receive the best medical care, bond with the physician, and be satisfied with the care experience. A Spanish Language Task Force identified the issue of Spanish-speaking patients visiting Primary Care Departments. Not all physicians who self-identify as Spanish-speaking truly speak fluently. Once an individual assessment is completed, then a plan for concordance can be made.

EDITORIAL

85 High Satisfaction: Thank You Survey Respondents! Tom Janisse, MD
The Permanente Journal (TPJ) conducted its fifth reader survey and found continued high satisfaction. Of the 2910 respondents—70% physicians, 15% clinicians, 11% nurses, academic researchers, leaders, and managers—53% rated TPJ “excellent,” 49% “good,” 12% “average,” 4% “fair,” and 2% “poor.” Reader comments and requests are cited with 2009 actions, including new electronic capabilities.

NARRATIVE MEDICINE

87 From Microscope to Comfy Chair: Imaging Control in Interview Situations. Susan Fairbairn; Gavin Fairbairn
This presents a simple model as a series of metaphorical images—microscope, picture frame, mirror, and two comfy chairs—that correspond to points on a continuum of levels of control exerted by interviewers, and a second continuum, from low to high empathy.