

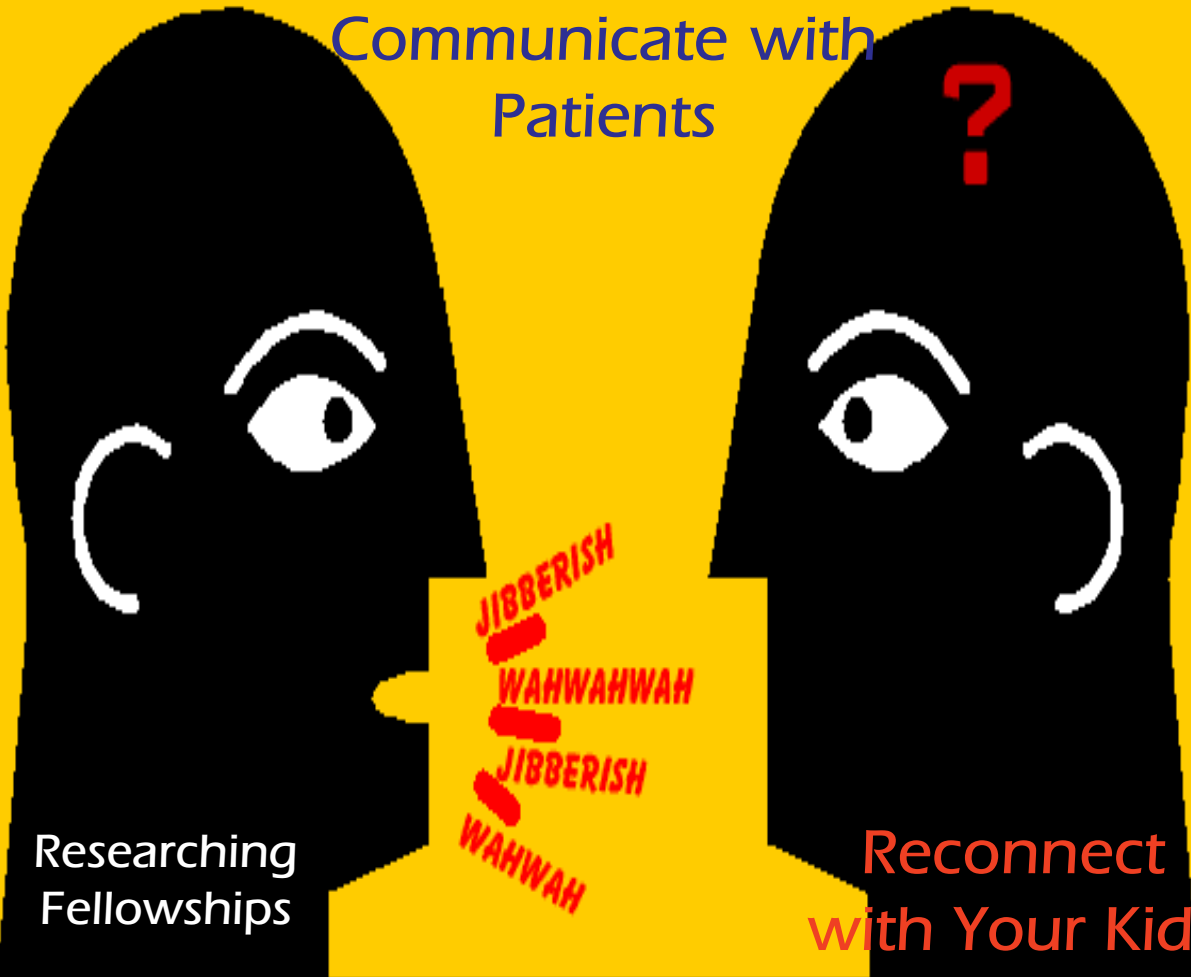


# SURVIVING RESIDENCY

Practical Guidance on Managing Work-Life Issues


## ***SWITCHING ROLES FROM DOCTOR TO PATIENT***

How to Effectively  
Communicate with  
Patients



Researching  
Fellowships

Reconnect  
with Your Kids



**SURVIVING  
RESIDENCY**  
Practical Guidance on Managing Work-Life Issues

January/February 2006  
Vol. 1, No. 4

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**Possible Carcinogen Goes Bye-Bye**

Under the EPA's voluntary "global stewardship program" makers of Teflon and other non-stick, stain-resistant products will reduce emissions of a suspected carcinogen, perfluorooctanoic acid or PFOA, made during the manufacturing process.

In studies on animals, PFOA caused malignant tumors and immune suppression. The Environmental Working Group reports that 95 percent of Americans tested show evidence of the chemical in their blood. Under the terms of the program, by 2010, DuPont and six other major chemical companies will reduce emissions and product content levels of PFO and PFOA precursors by 95 percent and then completely eliminate it by 2015.

52%

**Medicare Drug Program Hard to Navigate**

According to a Associated Press-Ipsos poll, more than 52 percent of respondents think the new Medicare prescription drug program is tough to understand. About 3.6 million have enrolled in the plan, in addition to the 6.4 million elderly poor adults who were shifted to it from Medicaid.



15%

**Hispanic Men At-Risk for Melanoma**

Researchers from the University of Southern California's Keck School of Medicine found a 7.3 percent annual increase in the rate of invasive melanoma in Hispanic men compared to Hispanic women and non-Hispanic whites between 1996 and 2001 in California..

**-Cancer**

**Blacks Have Greater Risk of Lung Cancer**

In a study published in *New England Journal of Medicine*, researchers found that whites who smoked up to a pack a day of cigarettes had a 43 percent to 55 percent lower risk of lung cancer than Blacks who smoked the same amount. Hispanics and Japanese-Americans were 60 percent to 80 percent less likely than Blacks to develop the disease. No differences in lung cancer risk among the ethnic groups were found for those who smoked more than three packs a day.

**Depressed Patients Get Immediate Lift**

In a study published in *Medicine & Science in Sports and Exercise*, researchers found a single 30-minute walk on a treadmill can give a temporary emotional lift to patients with a major depressive disorder. Other studies have shown that regular exercise can help depression over time but this one shows that patients can receive immediate benefit.



**Just Say No to Milk**

The American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology estimates that up to 2 million, or 8%, of children in the United States are affected by food allergies, and that eight foods account for 90% of food allergy reactions: milk, eggs, peanuts, wheat, soy, fish, shellfish, and tree nuts.





## STOCKS ARE PAYING

Dividends are making a comeback. According to Standard & Poor's, the number of dividend payouts to shareholders increased by 12 percent in 2005, more than twice the historical growth rate of 5 percent.

## WONDER GOES WHEAT



Wonder Bread, historically synonymous with white bread, launched two whole wheat versions that look, taste, and feel just like the original.

## WILL YOU BE MY VALENTINE?

15 percent of American women send themselves flowers on Valentine's Day.

Approximately 90 million roses, primarily red, will be sold and delivered for Valentine's Day.

-DrSpock.com



## TROUBLE IN AMERICA

According to a study by the University of Chicago's National Opinion Research Center, there is less happiness in America than 10 years ago. The percentage of respondents experiencing at least one negative life event increased from 88 percent in 1991 to 92 percent in 2004.

## WINTER OLYMPICS TRIVIA

- Curling is one of four Winter Olympic sports contested indoors. The other three are hockey, figure skating, and speed skating.
- Nordic combined is one of three current Olympic Winter Games events in which the United States has never won a medal. (Biathlon and curling are the others.)
- It's been 18 years since the Jamaican bobsled team made its debut at the Olympics.
- The oldest man to receive a Winter Olympics medal is 83-year-old Anders Haugen. The Norwegian-American actually received his ski jump bronze medal 50 years after he competed in 1924 when a scoring error was discovered in 1974.
- Only two countries south of the equator have ever won medals at the Olympic Winter Games—Australia and New Zealand.

-Factmonster.com



## DID YOU KNOW...?

### HEALTH BENEFITS OF DARK CHOCOLATE



Dark chocolate is rich in flavonoids, which protect against heart disease, and has been shown to lower elevated blood pressure in otherwise healthy adults. For maximum benefit, eat dark chocolate that is at least 70 percent cocoa. Not a fan of chocolate? Flavonoids also abound in red wine, apples, onions, and green tea.



### SUMMER CAMP SEARCH

Now is the time to start looking at summer camps for your children. Many programs have February deadlines and fill up quickly.



### WHAT PARENTS MISS MOST

According to a Parenting.com poll, 63 percent of respondents said that time to sleep late together is the thing that they miss most about married life before kids. 22 percent of respondents missed sex most and 15 percent of respondents longed for time for conversation.

### SPACE HEATER SAFETY



If you are trying to save money by lowering your thermostat and using a space heater, be sure to turn it off when you leave the room or go to sleep. And, when you do have it on, make sure that it is at least three feet away from anything flammable.

### LATEST TRENDS IN BLOW-DRYERS



Looking for what's hot in blow-dryers? Designed to help seal the hair cuticle and boost shine, ionic dryers work well with thick or frizzy hair. Those looking to turn up the heat should look for dryers with "ceramic technology." Translation: A ceramic heating element delivers more heat.



With the increase of dual career families, many parents feel that they don't spend enough time with their children. However, on the contrary, today's parents are spending more time than ever with their children. A University of Michigan study found that children between the ages of 3 and 12 in two-parent families spent about 31 hours a week with their mother and 23 hours a week with their father in 1997, compared to 25 hours per week and 19 hours per week, respectively, in 1981. Yet, despite what the numbers say, do you feel that your children are getting the short end of the

stick? Well, here are some way to make sure that you stay engaged in your children's lives.

#### *Understand the Kinds of Time*

We hear the phrase all the time, but what is "quality time"? Is singing to your infant considered quality time? Does taking your children to the movies count? Parents should recognize that the time that you spend with your kids can be classified three ways.

A photograph of a woman with long dark hair, wearing a white top, smiling and looking down at a book she is holding. A child's head is visible in the foreground, looking at the book. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with greenery.

# FEELING LIKE AN ABSENTEE PARENT?

## How To Reconnect with Your Kids

by Lesly Sheridan

- One-on-one time:** Activities, such as reading, playing, talking, etc., that just involve you and your child
- Family time:** Activities, like eating a meal and going on vacation, that involve the entire family
- Community time:** Activities, such as going to church and attending sporting events, that involve the entire family, or just you and your child, interacting with others in your community

As you go through your day-to-day activities, you will find that the “quality time” that you spend with your child is combination of all three. Researchers at Cornell University and the University of Utah found that 22 percent of parents child-rearing efforts were spent on primary child care (bathing, feeding, dressing, teaching, supervising, etc.), 10 percent on secondary child care (cooking, cleaning, etc.), 13 percent on sharing household work, 31 percent on leisure activities, and 25 percent on sharing mealtimes.

### *Find Ways to Connect*

Quality time for most is simply building memories with your child, and there are many ways to do that.

•**Volunteer together.** Working together to help others in need will help develop your child’s spirit of generosity and give you both a feeling of satisfaction.

•**Eat a meal.** Keri Willenborg, co-founder and director of franchise development for Supper Thyme USA., said “Studies have shown that when we eat together as a family unit, we eat healthier and communicate better with others.”

·**Read a book.** Reading to your children not only increases their interest in books but also stimulates language



development according to research studies.

·**Do chores.** Working together teaches responsibility and teamwork.

·**Help with schoolwork.** When parents show an active interest in what their child is learning in school it can influence the child to show a greater interest in his or her studies, as well.

·**Start a project or ritual.** “Family routines and rituals are important to the health and well-being of today’s busy families, according to a review of 32 studies over the past 50 years. . . .Rituals are very important and convey that ‘this is who we are as a group’ and provide continuity in meaning across generations,” said Barbara Fiese, professor and department chair of psychology in the College of Arts and Sciences at Syracuse University.



·**Play games.** A weekly game night with board and/or card games is something to which everyone can look forward.

·**Plan a trip.** Fiese said, “Taking brief or extended trips over the summer can help in establishing a tradition that fosters togetherness and creates shared experiences for families.”

·**Be there when you’re not.** Leaving notes in pockets and shoes to be found while you are at work or reading books on tapes that can be played back when you are working late are simple ways to let your child know that you care even when you are not home.

### *Come Up with a Plan*

Between working, studying, and everything else, many residents feel that there just are not enough hours in the day to spend as much time with their children as they would like. How do you fit quality time into a packed schedule? Simply put, you schedule it. Although it may seem a little strange to pencil Little Johnny in from 5:00pm to 6:00pm on Thursday, it will ensure that you two spend time together.

Now, that your child is on the schedule, plan what you are going to do ahead of time, and definitely seek your child’s input. According to the National Kids Day Mean-



ingful Time Survey by Boys & Girls Clubs of America, parents and children from the same family disagree about activities that constitute meaningful time. In the survey, 49 percent of the children said that fun-focused activities constitute meaningful time whereas 62% of the parents thought instructive activities were more meaningful.

Roxanne Sillet, president of Boys & Girls Clubs of America, feels that parents should look at how they are spending time with their children. Although parents may feel that they are spending meaningful time with their children, the kids may not feel the same way. And, while it may be easier to plan activities for the entire family, parents should remember that it is important to spend time alone with each child, apart from brothers and sisters.

Finally, when you are spending time with your child, make every moment count. Tune out any distractions and focus on your child.

## Say “AHHHHH!” Switching Roles from Doctor to Patient

Between the hustle and bustle of taking care of patients, sometimes residents forget that they are people, too. As such, sometimes it becomes necessary for you to switch roles and be the patient, instead of the doctor. As you tell your patients, getting routine check-ups will ensure that you stay in tip-top shape.

### *Monthly Home Exams*

You should examine some areas of your body, like your skin and breasts, on a monthly basis at home. “The most important thing in treating skin cancer is early detection. Patients must be vigilant about moles and must seek immediate professional help [if they find something irregular],” said George Hollenberg, board-certified dermatopathologist and founding director of Acupath Laboratories, Inc.

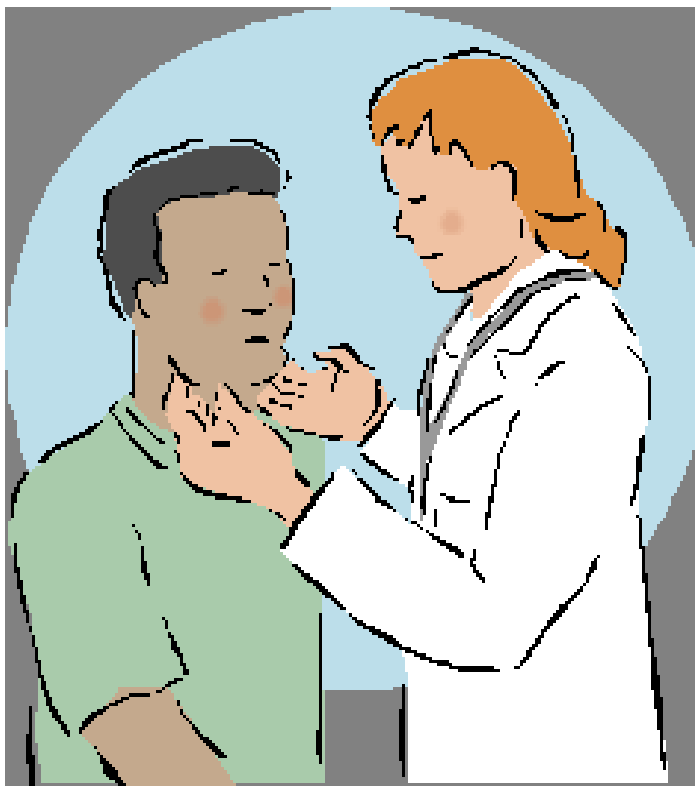
Dr. Cynthia Louise Drogula, medical director and breast surgeon at The Aiello Breast Center at Baltimore Washington Medical Center said, “The benefit [of self-examination] is real, however, as most breast lumps are discovered by the woman herself. Women who perform regular breast self exams can find lumps much smaller than women who do not.”

Unfortunately, Lyn Carlton, certified breast health facilitator and educator for the American Cancer Society, revealed “While 96 percent of women know that the best protection against breast cancer is early detection and all of those are aware of the importance of breast self exams, only 20 percent perform them regularly.”

Doctors also recommend that men check their testicles for any abnormal lumps every month.

### *The Annual Visit*

The American Medical Association, U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, and other large health groups no longer recommend the traditional annual physical exam for most healthy adults. However, in a study published in a June 2005 issue of *Archives of Internal Medicine*, 94 percent of the close to 800 primary care doctors surveyed believed annual physical exams are an opportune time to explore patient con-



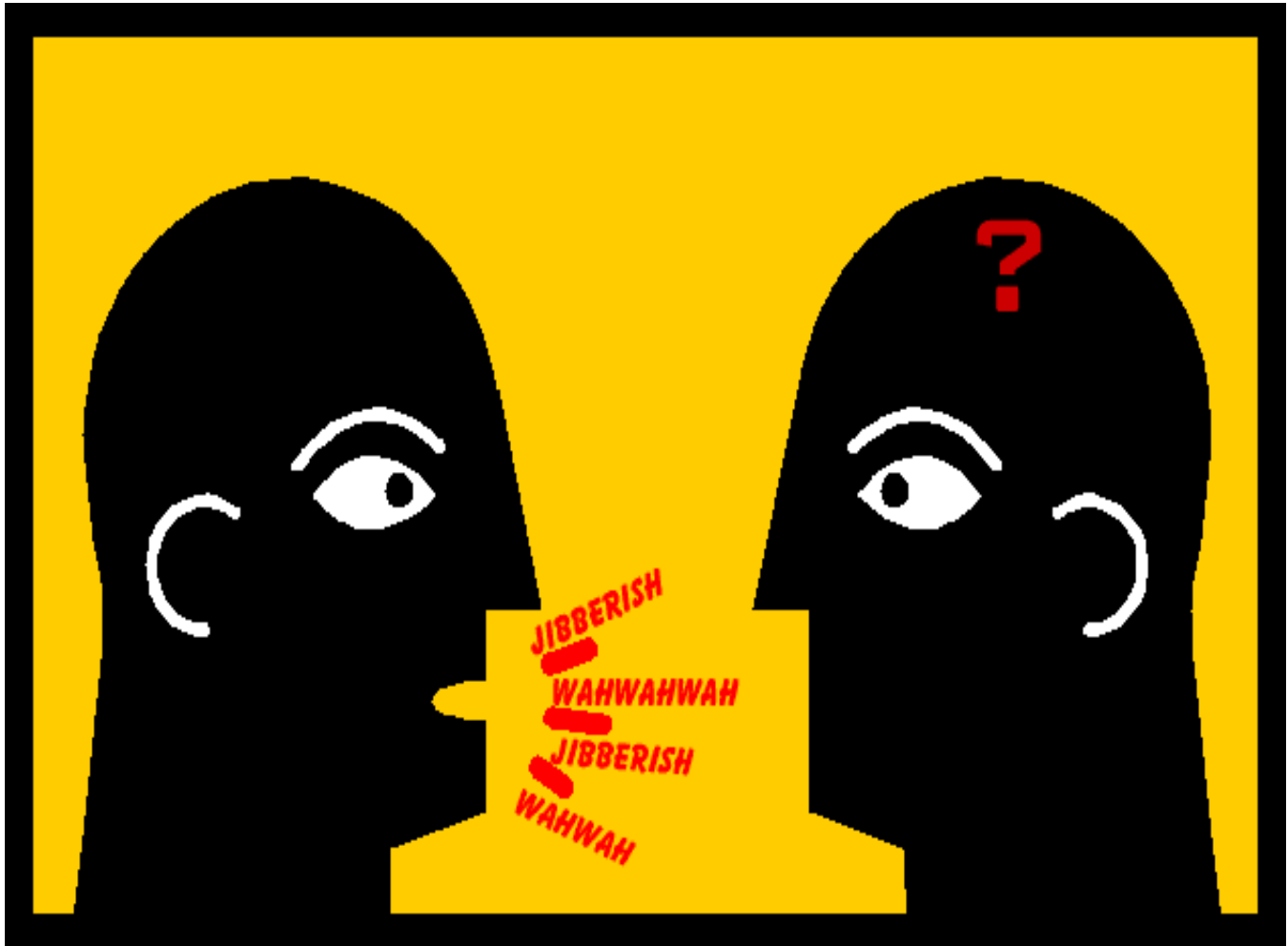
cerns and educate them on how to improve their general health.

Yet, many do feel that the notion of a one-size fit all battery of tests is outdated. Dr. Joyce G. Schwartz, vice president and chief laboratory officer for Quest Diagnostics and former professor at the University of Texas, said “Diagnostic testing can provide important insights into your health, such as if you need vitamin supplements, have high cholesterol or are at risk for cancer or diabetes. You should talk to your doctor about screenings appropriate for your age, sex and health goals.”

It can be easy to become so engrossed in caring for your patients, that you put your own healthcare needs on the back burner. However, taking care of yourself and staying healthy will benefit both you and your patients in the end.

# Communicate with Your Patients in a Language They Understand

**by Andrea Hill**



One of the most challenging aspects of being a doctor is communicating with patients. In order to ensure a patient is able to receive and benefit from medical care, effective communication is key. While we all know that medical terminology can prohibit a patient's understanding, there are many other ways to fail at communicating vital information to patients, which can lead to medical advice misunderstandings, patient omitting important information, and ultimately, patient distrust of medical care. When you consider the consequences, physicians have no choice but to perfect their communications with patients.

## *Setting the Foundation for Good Communication*

James Miller, author of *Communicating Effectively*, believes that good communication is founded on excellent listening skills. "Active listening allows you to identify the underlying reason for the conversation and pinpoint what areas should be addressed. Also, when listening actively, you are more likely to recall information pertinent to the conversation."

Active listening is important when communicating with patients because while speaking, patients may relay information that they find trivial but is more important than expected. A good way to make sure that you are actively listening is to focus on the words the patient says. If possible, allow the patient to speak without interference. And, try to forgo analysis until the end of the conversation.

Evidence found by the National Health and Research Council indicates that allowing patients to present their opening statements without interruption at the start makes it more likely that issues of concern will be identified. Active listening also includes making eye contact, watching verbal and non-verbal cues, and restating or clarifying information or questions provided by the patient.

Not only will active listening benefit your diagnosis, but it can also ease any fears the patient may have that you are indifferent to his or her issues. "Recipients of your communication feel that you understand them, and when we feel understood, we open the door to trust," said Lisa Aldisert, workplace trends expert and author of *Valuing People: How Human Capital Can Be Your Greatest Asset*.

### *Communicating Diagnoses*

After information about symptoms is gathered, it is the doctor's responsibility to provide effective communication regarding his or her diagnosis. When explaining the diagnosis, there are many things to consider. Always weigh how the patient wants to receive the information. Some patients want every detail regarding the situation. Other patients want only the bottom line.

At times, especially with children and the elderly, the information is to be shared with someone else. Dr. Terry Brown, a pediatrician in Atlanta, GA, thinks many of her patients are too young to understand everything about their diagnosis. She said, "In pediatrics, it is important for the parents or caretakers for it. When delivering bad news, the best method is to be as informative as possible and allow patients to deal with the diagnosis in their own way.

### *Communicating Treatments*

When prescribing a treatment or medication, be sure to inform your patient of all the benefits and side effects from the treatment. Give a thorough explanation of the treatment and its desired effects. Let the patient know if there has been any studies supporting the benefits of the treatment as well as any long term effects from said treatment.

Basically, answer all of the questions that you may want to know if you were the patient: How long will it take before I see any change? What are the estimated costs? Does the treatment effect any medication that I am currently taking?

While most medications are accompanied with written directions and frequently asked questions, these pamphlets or brochures should only be used as supporting evidence. They should not serve as a substitute for verbal explanations.



should only be used as supporting evidence. They should not serve as a substitute for verbal explanations.

#### **Benefits of Good Communication**

**Builds trust between patient and doctor**

**Helps patient disclose information**

**Enhances patient satisfaction**

**Helps the patient make better health decisions**

**Leads to more realistic patient expectations**

**Produces more effective practice**

**Reduces the risk of errors and mishaps**

### *Maintaining Medical Records*

Adequate and accurate medical records are an important part of good communication. The medical record is an essential part of the communication process because it documents the history between the patient and previous doctors. Good medical records will allow another physician or nurse to continue caring for the patient with full knowledge of past illnesses and treatments, increasing the chance of positive healthcare outcomes.

In summary, good communication requires a lot of dedication, time, and focus in order to ensure the patient is receiving the best care and advice as possible. Good communication may be the difference between a speedy recovery and years of unnecessary suffering.

# The NUTS and BOLTS of Researching Fellowship Programs

After years of training, you have resolved to specialize. Determining your area of specialty is only part of the puzzle, figuring out where you should train is the other part. Although the fellowship application process is similar to that for residency, you are probably more specific about what you are looking for in a fellowship program and also may have to take a different family situation into account. With all the variables that are in play, how do you determine where to apply?

Clinical experience, program size, research opportunity, work setting, resources, reputation of attendings, geography...the list of things you can consider when deciding where to apply is endless. The first step is to really be honest with yourself about the features that you desire (and do not). Not crazy about research and looking to go into private practice? A program that stresses research probably is not for you. Intrigued about a particular procedure? Then you should make sure that the programs that you are looking at handle those types of cases.

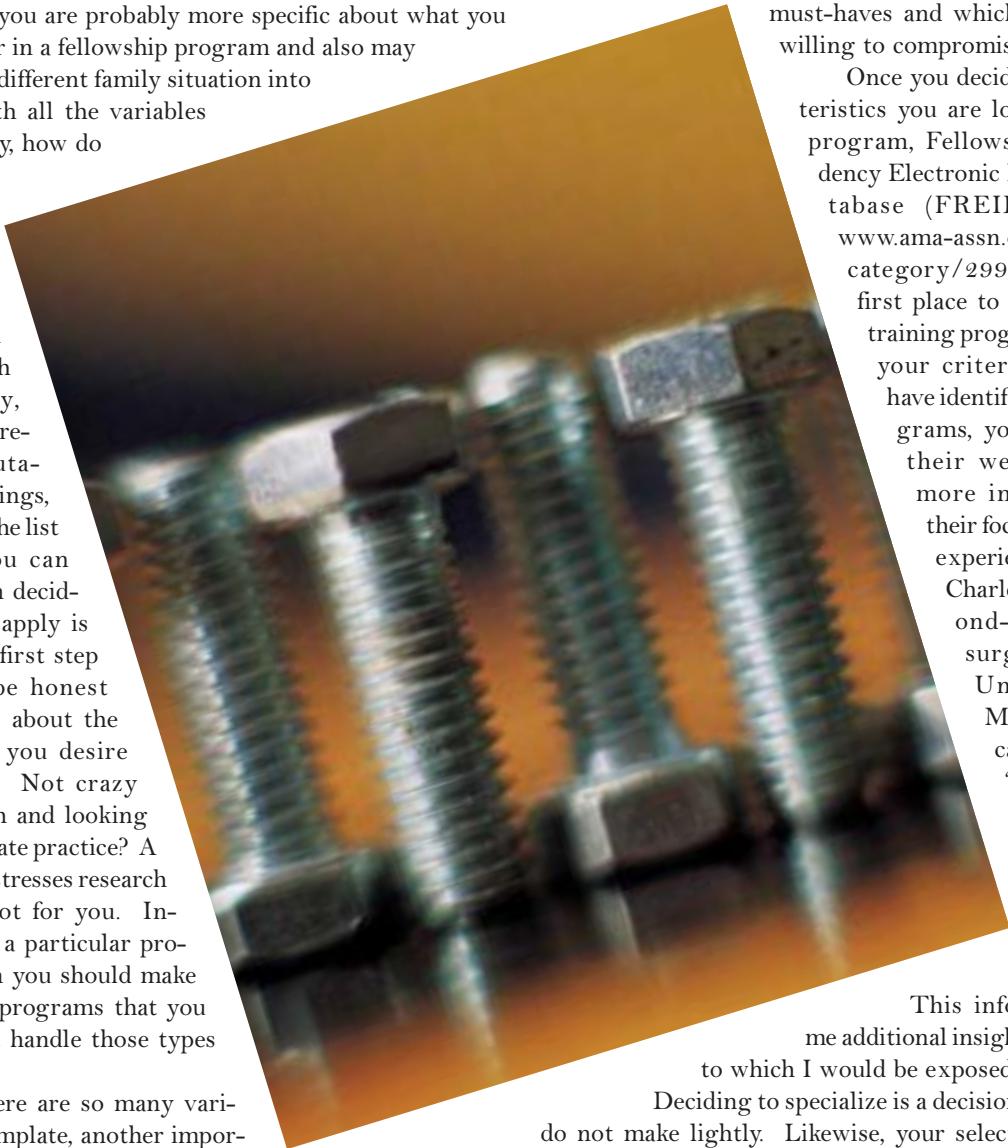
Since there are so many variables to contemplate, another important step is to prioritize those things that are most important to you. While some programs will have all the features that you desire, other programs might only have some of those aspects for which you are looking. Dr. Rao Gutta, a second-year vascular surgery fellow at Univer-

sity of Maryland Medical System, considered operative experience, location, and call schedule when looking at programs. Determining what things are most important to you will help you figure out what variables are must-haves and which ones you are willing to compromise.

Once you decide what characteristics you are looking for in a program, Fellowship and Residency Electronic Interactive Database (FREIDA) (<http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/category/2997.html>) is the first place to look for which training programs to map to your criteria. Once you have identified specific programs, you should view their websites to get more information on their focus and training experience. Dr. Kirk Charles, another second-year vascular surgery fellow at University of Maryland Medical System, said, "I searched on PubMed to see what papers program faculty members had published.

This information gave me additional insight into the cases to which I would be exposed."

Deciding to specialize is a decision that residents do not make lightly. Likewise, your selection process of where to apply for your additional training should not be taken lightly either. By assessing what you desire from a training program and your career goals and then researching programs, you can increase your chances of a positive fellowship match.



**QUICK TRIP**

Ski trip destinations can be found in the United States, Europe, Scandinavia and even Australia, and all of these destinations are widely popular destinations for travelers. And, there is more to a ski trip than just skiing. You can enjoy snowboarding, snowmobiling, or even dog sledding, as well. One of the best ways to plan your ski vacation is to book a snow ski package. Rather than needing to contact individual companies for airfare, lift tickets, car rental, and accommodations, you can book with one company which can offer one all-inclusive package. These companies can even make arrangements for off-slope activities that you are interested in such as tours of local places, ski lessons and health spa bookings. These inclusive packages make vacationing easy, convenient, affordable, and fun.

**About The Author:** Brock Vanstanz is the manager of Me Skiing Group a company dedicated to providing the best resources for skiing. For more information, visit <http://www.meskiing.com>.

**QUICK FIX**

Are you receiving the pop-up messages while browsing the internet? A lot of legitimate websites use standard pop-up and pop-under advertising because it's the highest paying form of per-impression advertising on the Internet.

Luckily, there are several FREE solutions to your problem. The best way to cut down on pop-ups is the use a pop-up blocker. A pop-up blocker is included in the latest version of Internet Explorer. (The easiest way to update Internet Explorer is through Windows Update.)

Alternatively, you may download a free toolbar with pop-up blocker from Google, Alexa, and MSN.

**About The Author:** John Ashburn has been involved in computer technical support for over seven years. He has worked in many positions and is skilled at providing clear and easy to digest information to end users about everyday problems with a unique minimalistic writing style.

**QUICK EATS**

When asked to define the annual event of the Super Bowl, most people would likely include the four F's: football, food, friends and fun. This makes Super Bowl fans a pretty easy crowd to please. Score a touchdown of your own during the 2006 Super Bowl by serving up some delicious munchies that offer nutrition in disguise to keep football fans cheering through the entire game and friends coming back year after year.

Here are a few basic game rules from the Peanut Bureau of Canada for introducing the perfect starting line-up of munchies and executing a delicious and nutritious spread, without the opposition (your guests) ever knowing what hit them.

- Keep it simple. Remember that the majority of the food will be scarfed down with eyes glued to the game and, as



host of the party, low maintenance food means more time to enjoy the game with friends. Prepare cold stuff like veggies and dip the day before and toss the hot stuff in the crock pot to keep it hot all afternoon long.

- Fit it in the palm of your hand. If it requires more than one utensil in order to eat it consider ways of making it into bite size, easy-to-eat format. For example, instead of one large quiche why not try making a line-up of mini versions.

- Raise the roof. Rather than serving carbohydrate laden snacks like chips and sandwiches that will have guests dosing off on your couch, serve snacks that pack a protein punch so that your guests will be able to keep the spirit alive throughout the entire game. Examples of high protein menu items include: peanuts, chili, meatballs and chicken skewers.

- Don't break the bank. Paper plates, napkins and cups will make clean-up easy and create a relaxed party atmosphere.

For more great recipes and Super Bowl snack ideas such as Chili Peanut Popcorn and Peanut Butter Swirl Brownies visit [www.peanutbureau.ca](http://www.peanutbureau.ca).

- News Canada



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