

## REFLECTIONS IN FAMILY MEDICINE

# My Experiences with the North American Primary Care Research Group: A Reflection from an Emerging Primary Care Researcher

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**As an early career medical educator and a relatively new member of the North American Primary Care Research Group, and as an emerging researcher, author would like to share his experiences with NAPCRG using the 5 Ws to mark the organization's 50th Anniversary. (J Am Board Fam Med 2022;35:872–873.)**

I attended my first ever North American Primary Care Research Group (NAPCRG) conference in November 2016. I had just been hired 4 months prior as a research scientist to direct family medicine residency research. During my orientation, some faculty colleagues encouraged me to join NAPCRG and the Society of Teachers of Family Medicine. I did and had my first experience with NAPCRG at Colorado Springs, Colorado. Though I did not have any work to present at the conference, my department chair, Rick Kellerman, MD, encouraged me to attend and use the time to learn about the development of scholarly production and research in family medicine.

Several things have contributed to my continued NAPCRG membership and participation in every conference since 2016. First, I had a great experience during my first conference. It was mind-blowing! The venue of the conference, the Broadmoor Resort in Colorado Springs, was a *value-added* way to welcome me to the group. I enjoyed every part of the resort; I have photographs of the picturesque mountains and the animals that roamed freely around the resort.

Second, I learned so much from my fellow researchers. Connections made there with emerging and seasoned researchers led to several

collaborative projects. It was also during this conference that I learned about family medicine journals like the *Annals of Family Medicine*, the *Journal of the American Board of Family Medicine*, and the *Family Medicine*. I left the conference convinced that NAPCRG was an organization I wanted to engage with actively. In support of that goal, I attended and presented at the 2017 conference in Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

Third, the feedback I received during my presentation at the 2017 conference was exceptionally meaningful. I presented findings on *Family Physicians' Perceptions of Electronic Cigarette in Tobacco Use Counseling*.<sup>1</sup> I was pleasantly surprised by the diverse group of attendees, who showed interest and provided useful critique of the poster. Based on their feedback, a second study was conducted on the topic with findings published in the *Kansas Journal of Medicine*.<sup>2</sup>

Interestingly, it was during this second conference when I became convinced of where I should focus my personal research interests. As an early career medical educator, I had several wide-ranging research interests. But, after attending several sessions on topics relating to burnout and other forms of emotional distress among health care professionals, I was able to narrow down my interests to faculty and trainee wellness and well-being.

Finally, with these research interests, I participated in the NAPCRG's Grant Generating Project (GGP) Fellowship, where I met great mentors like Jennifer Carroll, MD, and Gillian Bartlett-Esqulant, PhD. Dr Carroll took a particular interest in mentoring me and connected me with other scientists like Edward James Bujold, MD; Andy

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Pasternak, MD, MS; Kim S. Kimminau, PhD; and Christina M. Hester, PhD, MPH, who continue to mentor me to be a better researcher. Through these connections, we collaborated on a couple of national projects on health care professionals' well-being published in the *Journal of the American Board of Family Medicine* and the *Family Medicine*.<sup>3,4</sup>

I applaud the NAPCRG for its work through GGP, Building Research Capacity Program, Building Research Capacity Fellowship, and Patient and Clinician Engagement Program. While these programs focus on supporting research capacity, they excel by creating opportunities to establish a formal mentoring relationship where seasoned researchers can be paired with emerging scholars to support the growth and development of the latter. Mentees with a goal to develop unique research interests could be paired with a mentor or mentors in related area, but having several mentors or a team of mentors will assist emerging scholars in their growth and development.

Now to the future. There are many ways NAPCRG can lead primary care into the future. One way is to evaluate the effectiveness of using telemedicine technologies to provide care to patients. With the recurrent surges in COVID-19 cases, some primary care physicians reported a reduction in patient volume as their patients seemed to forgo recommended preventive care and ongoing care for chronic conditions.<sup>5,6</sup> Future primary care research can focus on multimodal intervention to ensure the benefits of previously underutilized telemedicine modalities to increase the value we bring to patients. Telemedicine seems to be an effective way to deliver care and improve patient experiences.<sup>7-9</sup> NAPCRG could fund a well-designed study to investigate the effectiveness of multimodal intervention, including telemedicine in providing primary care to patients.

Congratulations to NAPCRG on 50 years of great work advancing primary care research. I look forward to my continued involvement with the organization, which will include mentoring the next generation of primary care researchers.

To see this article online, please go to: <http://jabfm.org/content/35/4/872.full>.

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