



WESTCHESTER PHYSICIAN

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PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

THE 3 MOST IMPORTANT THINGS I CAN SAY TO MY COLLEAGUES

This is the last Presidential message of my term before my parting words next month. I remember when Dr. Abe Levy was in this position his article was on 10 things to do and remember in practice. The one I remember the most was “remember that email is forever” he made the point to watch what you memorialize in print! I think 10 things are too much and we as humans rarely get past 3 things at most to remember. So, I have been thinking what are the 3 most important things I can say to my colleagues?

First is not to be discouraged! On the surface, it may seem we have lost our fight to remain independent caretakers of our patients. We are treated by the insurance industry and government more and more like the hired help, and even the institutions that employ us do not treat us very well. But ultimately, how our status is defined in society remains in the hands of our patients, who still love and respect us! It is the art of medicine that makes us what we are, not the science. If it was just the science we could be replaced by a computer, which will also never happen. It is the fact that we physically touch our patients as well as counsel them and emotionally support them, without any judgement, which makes us so different than all others. Over the centuries of medicine our treatments and understanding of disease has changed enormously, but not what we do for our patients and society; that has not changed at all. We have society behind us and we have the enormity of our work; which will always in the long run be the insurance that we are kept high in society’s eyes, providing for us the continued advantage over those that would enslave us for their monetary gain.

The Fight must go on! We cannot and should not give up. It is way too important to our profession and our patients. And we make a difference. We have stopped many “assaults” on our profession.

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GINO C. BOTTINO, MD
President, WCMS

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UPCOMING EVENTS

WCMS/WAM Annual Meeting
Thursday, June 1, 2017
Westchester Country Club
Rye, NY

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FROM THE EDITOR...

PETER J. ACKER, MD

BOOK REVIEW: THE INVENTION OF NATURE: ALEXANDER VON HUMBOLDT'S NEW WORLD BY ANDREA WULF



As a young boy growing up in Miami, I was a bit of a nature nerd. I collected butterflies, spending inordinate time in the fields near our house, net in hand. I also was an avid bass fisherman and most Saturdays found me at one of the many canals that are ubiquitous in South Florida, rod in hand. I didn't mind long intervals between bites, because it gave the opportunity to observe the insect, bird and plant life surrounding the canal. One time I was startled and then entranced by a manatee propelling his enormous bulk languidly down the canal. I sometimes would pretend I was deep in the Amazon, exploring and collecting. One book that I read back then was called *The Plant Hunters* about botanists who searched for new species of plants. I also read a child's version biography of Alexander Von Humboldt and was transfixed by the account of his year's long exploration the South American continent.

Since reading that bio at age ten, I don't recall a single reference to him in any of my high school or college biology classes and my awareness of him receded over the years. That ended this year when my sister sent me Andrea Wulf's wonderful account of his life. Alexander Von Humboldt born in 1769, embarked on his 5 year trek through South America in 1799 when he was barely 30. He was the pre-eminent scientist of his time, world famous and admired by such figures as Johan Wolfgang Von Goethe, Charles Darwin, Walt Whitman and Thomas Jefferson just to name a few. He created the underpinnings of ecology and environmentalism. So it is somewhat astonishing there is so little mention of him today. As Andrea Wulf states near the beginning of her book, "it is almost as though his ideas have become so manifest that the man behind them has disappeared."

He was indefatigable in his explorations and in his passion he ignored all dangers. He paddled by canoe up the Amazon, conducted risky experiments with electric eels, calmly set up his instruments during a violent earthquake in order to measure it. He was a formidable collector and observer and it was while in Sought America that he began to formulate his revolutionary ideas about nature. Wulf states that he "was the first to explain the fundamental functions of the forest for the ecosystem and climate: the tree's ability to store water and to enrich the atmosphere with moisture, their protection of the soil and their cooling effect." He also observed the direct effects of human activity upon natural systems and presciently predicted severe consequences upon climate and the environment. For example, while in Venezuela he observed that a local lake's water level was receding. He quickly deduced that while one factor was the siphoning of local streams for human use, equally significant was the effect of the wholesale felling of trees around the lake.

(Continued on page)

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MSSNY HOUSE OF DELEGATES HIGHLIGHTS

The Medical Society of the State of New York (MSSNY) conducted its 2017 House of Delegates Annual Meeting, April 20 - 23th, 2017, at the Westchester Marriott, Tarrytown, NY. The following physicians from Westchester and Putnam Counties attended and served as your elected delegates and alternates to the House of Delegates

Delegates

Robert Ciardullo, MD, *White Plains*
 Louis McIntyre, MD, *Sleepy Hollow*
 Thomas Lester, MD, *Mount Kisco*
 Gino Bottino, MD, *Mount Kisco*
 Daniel Gold, MD, *White Plains*
 Peter Liebert, MD, *White Plains*

Marshal Peris, MD, *Brewster*
 Norma Kurtz, MD (Putnam)
 William Zurhellen, MD (Putnam)

9th District Delegate

Ranjana Cheterji, DO, *Mount Kisco*



The Westchester and Putnam Delegations, part of the 9th District Branch and Caucus, were led by Bonnie Litvack, MD, Mount Kisco, 9th District President. The group caucused several times to consider resolutions submitted by physicians from all over the state. Caucusing with Westchester and Putnam were delegates from Orange, Dutchess and Rockland counties, as well as several physicians representing their state specialty societies. After completion of reference committee hearings and deliberation in the House of Delegates (HOD), the following actions were taken by the HOD on resolutions submitted by the 9th District Branch:

(Continued on page 5)

Actions of the House—9th District Resolutions:

RESOLUTION 52

Improving EHR Technology to Enhance and Track Clinical Outcomes Introduced by the 9th District Branch, MSSNY SUBSTITUTE RESOLUTION ADOPTED

RESOLVED, that the Medical Society of the State of New York re-affirm MSSNY Policies 117.975 and 117.985; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Medical Society of the State of New York advocate that electronic health record companies assure that their products provide physicians with real time clinical feedback and focus on episodes of care.

117.975 Recommendations of White Paper: Improve EHR Satisfaction: MSSNY adopts the following recommendations to improve implementation and satisfaction among users of Electronic Health Records (EHR): 1. Improve design and workflow so that a. EHR doesn't take away time spent with patients b. does not interfere with doctor-patient relationship and c. Reduce total time spent on EHR per patient. 2. Workflow should be customizable not only to fulfill various needs of different specialties but also to accommodate needs of every individual physician. 3. Reduce documentation that serves functions other than care of patients and reconsider incentives and penalties 4. Reduce cost of EHR 5. EHR should help generate necessary billing reports and allow e-prescription of medications 6. EHR should prompt physicians about gaps in care of their patients and also help with clinical decision support 7. Improve interoperability between physicians and all healthcare providers. Peer to peer exchange should be the goal whether it's direct or through an exchange. 8. Improve value of notes in telling the patient's story and the thought process of the physician rather than the volume of data. 9. EHR should capture episodes of care rather than encounters (Adopted, Council April 17, 2016; Full white paper available upon request)

117.985: EHR Standardization : MSSNY will seek legislation or regulation to require all EHR vendors in New York State to utilize standard and interoperable software technology components to enable cost efficient use of electronic health records across all health care delivery systems, including institutional and community based settings of care delivery, and will transmit a copy of this resolution to the AMA for consideration at its next House of Delegates meeting. (HOD 2013-104; Reaffirmed HOD 2016-112 & 114)

RESOLUTION 54

Reduce Physician Practice Administrative Burden Introduced by the 9th District Branch, MSSNY SUBSTITUTE RESOLUTION ADOPTED

RESOLVED, that the Medical Society of the State of New York work with the AMA and the federation of medicine to advocate to repeal the law that conditions a portion of a physician's Medicare payment on compliance with the Medicare Merit- Based Incentive Payment System (MIPS) and Alternative Payment Models (APM) programs; and be it further

RESOLVED, that should full repeal not be achievable, the Medical Society of the State of New York work with the AMA and the federation of medicine to advocate for legislation and/or regulation to significantly reduce the administrative burdens and penalties associated with compliance with the MIPS and APM programs; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the New York delegation introduce a resolution at the June AMA House of Delegates meeting calling for similar action

RESOLUTION 61

Out of Network Insurance Benefit Availability in Individual Market and Self-Funded Plans Introduced by the 9th District Branch, MSSNY ADOPTED

RESOLVED, That MSSNY seek, through legislation and/or regulation, the availability of out-of-network benefits including plans utilizing usual, customary and reasonable (UCR) payment methodology for out-of-network benefits in all tiers, including the individual market and New York State of Health; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the MSSNY Delegation to the American Medical Association (AMA) introduce a similar resolution at the next meeting of the AMA House of Delegates for similar requirement in federally sponsored plans, federal exchange, and/or self-funded plans.

(Continued on page 7)

THE BUSINESS OF MEDICINE EFFICIENCY IN THE OFFICE RICK WEINSTEIN, MD, MBA

The most valuable resource in a doctor's office is the doctor's time. Whatever wastes the doctor's times is wasting this precious commodity. Your time is limited and you should not be wasting it on tasks that someone else can and should be doing.

Rich Doctor Poor Doctor

There are only a certain number of hours in the day. There are only so many patients you can see in a day. In the book "Rich Dad Poor Dad," the author Robert Kiyosaki teaches us that you can have other people work for you and expand your resources. In the book he states he could only deliver so many papers on a paper route, so he hired other kids to work for him and expanded the number of papers he delivered. This is exactly what a successful doctor needs to do. This means hiring not only physician assistants or nurses but the right staff. A good medical assistant can obtain the history and input data into your system. Doctors doing data entry is so ridiculous that we should be laughing if anyone suggests that.

Use Your Resources

Who is the best person to enter patient information into your system? Obviously it is not you. You have a college degree, medical school degree, completed internship and residency training: obviously you should not be the one typing into the computer. Nor should it be your medical assistant who has to get the information from the patient and then enter the information (although the MA is a much better option than the doctor). The best person to put info into your EHR is the source of the information, the patient. Nothing will be lost in translation as the source is entering the data him/herself. Also, it does not waste any of your or your staff's valuable time. This data can even be entered at home so the patient doesn't have to waste 20 minutes doing paperwork in your office. Almost all EHRs have programs that allow the patient to enter the information either online or in your office.

Getting a Life

Your notes should be completed when the patient leaves. I encourage dictating into Dragon in front of your patients. This allows patients to hear what you are thinking and better understand your plan. Patients will appreciate this openness. If you are taking charts home or working after hours on your notes, it's time to get your life back. Respect your own time.

These are all a waste of your time and should be done by someone else - **NOT the doctor:**

- Bringing patients into the room
- Obtaining the past histories from your patient (Past Medical History, Past Surgical History, Family History, Medications...)
- Inputting these past histories into your EHR
- Transporting patients to lab, x-ray or anywhere else
- Renewing prescriptions

How is Your Flow?

The physical layout of your office is extremely important to creating an efficient office. An office should flow and you should have systems in place. I use a colored flag system outside my rooms to designate if a patient needs an x-ray, injection, or is pre-op so I don't run around looking for the MA or surgical coordinator.

Your Time

Other people in your office need to respect your time and the privacy of being with your patient. You should not be interrupted while seeing patients unless it is for an emergency. This goes for phone calls as well.

Patient's Time

On the topic of time, I believe that making patients wait is disrespectful of their time. Five to 10 minutes of waiting is ideal but more than 20 minutes is just rude. Things happen, but if they do you should apologize personally.

Good EHR?

If your EHR slows you down significantly you need to fix this problem. Possible solutions are learn how to use the EHR better using templates, use Dragon and its shortcut commands, or get a better EHR. I currently use EPIC and after a few months I am efficient with it and not wasting too much time. It is very customizable and I hated my previous EHR, NextGen, which had way too much clicking.

Medicine is one of the few professions in the world that when technology was introduced it created more inefficiency. Don't allow your EHR to drag you down.

Most Valuable Resource

The bottom line is that your time as a physician is extremely valuable and should not be wasted. Your staff and you need to protect this limited and precious resource to utilize your time to maximally benefit your patients and your practice.



Actions of the House—9th District Resolutions:

(Continued from page 5)



RESOLUTION 111

Any Willing Provider with Universal Credentialing Introduced by the Ninth District Branch REFERRED TO COUNCIL

RESOLVED, That MSSNY seek, through legislation and/or regulation, mandates for insurer acceptance of any willing provider provision for its members/insured as long as nationally recognized credentialing criteria is met by the provider; and be it further

RESOLVED, That MSSNY, affirms Policy 130.941; and be it further

RESOLVED, That MSSNY seek, through legislation and/or regulation, requirements for insurer to accept and reimburse, at in-network level, out-of-network providers willing to provide elective services to patients with no out-of-network benefits as long as the provider meets nationally recognized credentialing criteria; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the MSSNY Delegation to the American Medical Association (AMA) introduce a similar resolution at the next meeting of the AMA House of Delegates for similar requirement in federally sponsored plans, federal exchange, and/or self-funded plans with no out-of-network benefits

RESOLUTION 256

Arbitrary Deadlines for New York State Workers' Compensation Peer Review Response Introduced by Ninth District Branch

ADOPTED as AMENDED

Resolved, that the Medical Society State of New York require that if a Workmen's Workers' Compensation peer review is requested by either party that the peer review be scheduled at a mutually acceptable time.



FROM THE EDITOR...

PETER J. ACKER, MD

BOOK REVIEW: THE INVENTION OF NATURE: ALEXANDER VON HUMBOLDT'S NEW WORLD BY ANDREA WULF

(Continued from page 2)

Throughout his life, he was a prodigious writer. He wrote a 34 volume account of his South American adventures and was widely admired for his fluid and even poetic writing. His writings exerted tremendous influence upon Charles Darwin and other scientists but also upon literary figures such as Whitman, Thoreau and Poe and later on environmentalists such as John Muir.

This book is lucidly written and does a good job of tying together all the disparate elements of this complex genius and capturing his unique personality. It is timely considering the various threats to our environment and I hope this book will serve to increase public awareness of this revolutionary figure.



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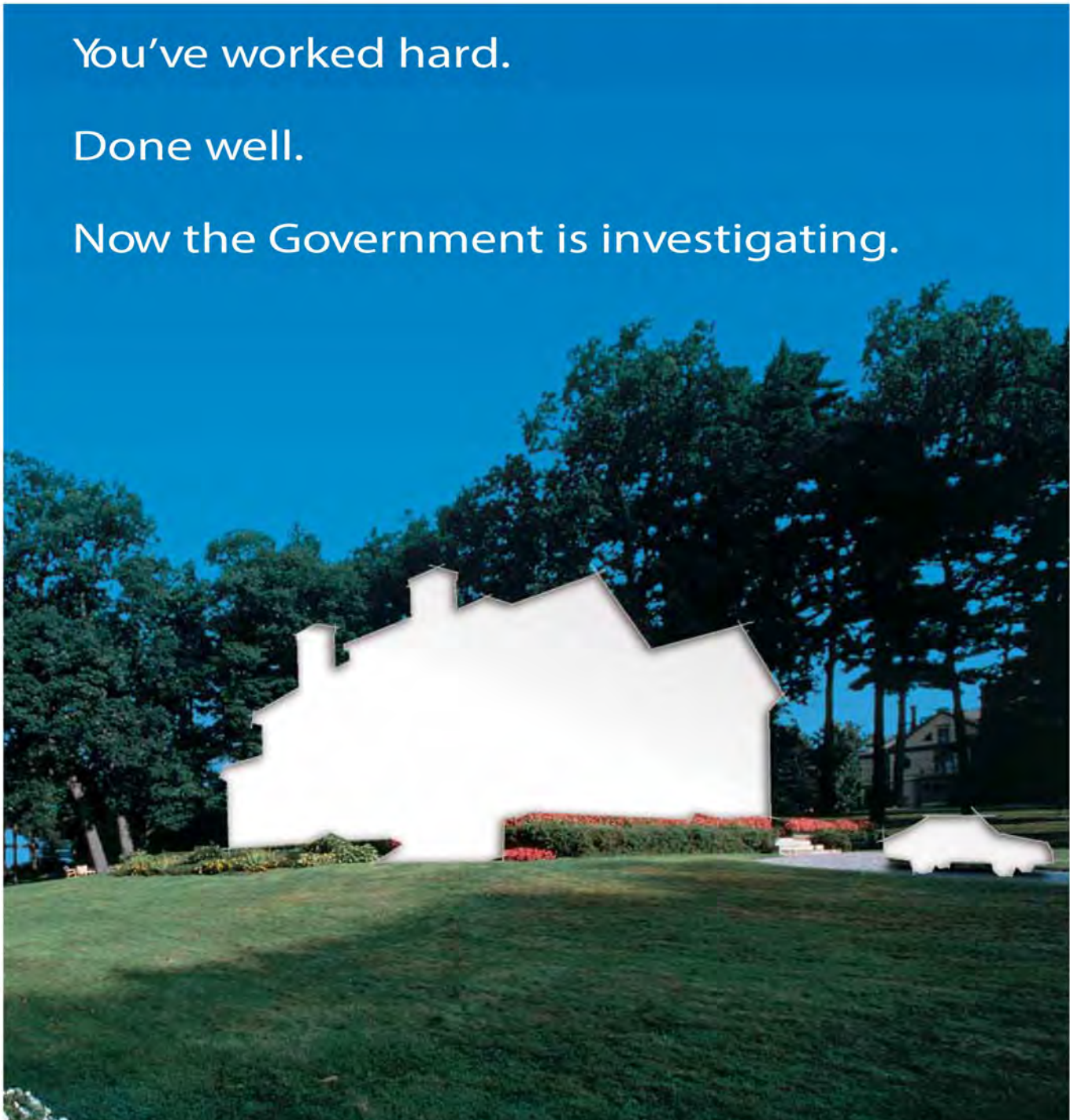
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ANNUAL REGENERON - WESTCHESTER SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING FAIR

JOSEPH TARTAGLIA, MD, PRESIDENT,
WESTCHESTER ACADEMY OF MEDICINE



The Academy of medicine has been a supporter of the Westchester science and engineering high school science fair for 8 years now and I had the pleasure of interviewing our three top award winners (of the 112 High School students who received awards from The Academy of Medicine out of the over 550 students in the fair). Our top “Future of Medicine” award winners will be attending our annual dinner on June 1st at the Westchester Country Club. They will bring their posters and present their research findings to our members during the cocktail hour and then their families and mentors will watch them receive their awards and recognition.

Johnathan Conte is a Byram Hills High School student who did his project on “*Examining the association between Alzheimer’s disease biomarkers, sleep behavior, and driving ability in older adults: A pilot study.*” He compared AD biomarkers, driving performance, and markers of sleep in 16 individuals age 65 years and older to find that individuals with higher levels of CSF tau and ptau (biomarkers for dementia) had poorer sleep and those elderly individuals that have less healthy sleep less drive less. Jonathan explains the importance of his research since “by 2050 one million people will be newly diagnosed and living with symptomatic AD every year.” He explains that there is no single assessment tool to determine if people with AD or other cognitive disease are capable of

driving.

When asked about the importance of his work he replies, “It is the hope that my research will provide useful information to improve the lives of an aging population, specifically those that are likely to develop symptomatic Alzheimer’s disease. Increased efforts to find a balance between maintaining safety and independence will help the aging population lead active, productive lives.”

Swetha Sriramoju is an Ardsley High School student who is interested in developing drugs in the field of Bioinformatics and Pharmacology. Her project studied ways to reduce the inflammatory response in diabetic retinopathy by targeting advanced Glycation Endproducts (AGE’s) and preventing their binding to the receptors (one of the pattern-recognition receptors). She used a program (AutoDock Tools and Vina) to determine binding affinity, hydrophobicity, logP values etc. and found that Statin drugs and Fibrin acid drugs had better blocking capability than Metformin.

Her work is breathtakingly difficult for a high school student to comprehend, involving work with computational computer modeling and a knowledge of organic chemistry and pharmacology as well as the pathogenesis of diabetes.

She proudly states, “My research not only holds the potential to find a drug treatment for Diabetic Retinopathy but other chronic inflammatory disorders that are derived from this condition as well for instance, Alzheimer’s Disease and hypertension.” Indeed, I was quite impressed by her comprehension of the medical science. She didn’t tell me her future plans but she is sure it will involve science research. “In the future I would like to explore more about the different types of pharmaceutical drugs that could possibly treat this condition as well as many others within the field of Bioinformatics and Pharmacology. I hope to apply computer science and molecular models to explore health challenges from a different perspective,” she says.

Karina Heaton is a student Senior at John Jay High School Cross River NY. She utilized europium doped silica nanoparticles to produce clearer images of tumors by using Cherenkov radiation (a type of radiation that occurs when electromagnetic waves travel faster than light in a medium). She believes this unique type of radiation never before used for cancer detection will prove useful. She couples this belief with the use of a safe nanoparticle

(Continued on page 14)

Physician Networking Event Thursday, May 4, 2017 Captain Lawrence Brewery Elmsford, NY



Drs. Omar Syed, Marshal Peris and Tom Lee addressing the crowd.

On Thursday, May 4, 2017 the Westchester County Medical Society hosted our first annual “Referral Rounds” physician networking event. About 70 physicians from all around Westchester joined us at the Captain Lawrence Brewery in Elmsford, New York for a fun night of getting to know their colleagues, not to mention great food and beer! This event was open to all physicians in Westchester, not just members of WCMS. We were able to open this event to non-members through event sponsorships provided by UBS—The Mitchell Wealthcare Group; Park Avenue Benefit Planning; Citizens Bank; DataMatrix Technologies; AgeWell New York; Medical Liability Mutual Insurance Company, and Kern Augustine, P.C.

Thank you to all of our sponsors for being part of such a great event! Keep your eyes open for another networking event in the fall.



Attendees of the evening's event networking



WCMS President-elect, Marshal Peris, MD; Maggie Smith (UBS) & Barry Mitchell (UBS)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

THE 3 MOST IMPORTANT THINGS I CAN SAY TO MY COLLEAGUES

(Continued from page 1)

Yes, we have lost some also, but fewer than we have won. With more involvement by our members, we can make more of a difference. At this point the number one fight is to increase our membership. There is power in numbers. Get your colleagues to join us. Teach them the importance of having a strong medical society that stands up and fights for our profession. Do not leave it for others to carry on the fight. It is up to us all.

We must try and end the fractured nature of our profession. Each specialty fighting for itself, and seemingly not caring what happens to other medical specialties. Our enemies have used this "divide and conquer approach" in dealing with us. Just the way they pick on one or two specialties to pounce upon each year, hoping the rest of us will be glad it is not us, and not come to the other's rescue. But we must be each other's support. We must stand together to effect any meaningful changes for our

profession.

The most important of all, is to remember that the physicians-teachers and healers of life are needed no less than a politician or a religious minister. We are the most needed professionals by the people. Be proud of what you are and how hard it was to achieve. Humility is being honest about what you are and what you do. It is not making light of it. Do not minimize your accomplishments as physicians, or its importance to society. No matter who or how much they want to control us they cannot; because they are not doctors.

I am forever proud of each and every one of you. It is enough for me, in my lifetime, to be amongst your ranks. To be a doctor is all I ever wanted for myself, and has been as rewarding as any endeavor in life could possibly be. I want to thank you all for what you do every day. I want to thank you for allowing me to represent you and be a part of your lives. May God bless us all.



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ANNUAL REGENERON - WESTCHESTER SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING FAIR

JOSEPH TARTAGLIA, MD, PRESIDENT, WESTCHESTER ACADEMY OF MEDICINE

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coated with antibodies against the tumor which when adherent to the tumor can be stimulated to release the Cherenkov radiation. I was curious as to why she wanted to use this type of radiation to visualize tumors:

Q. Why do you utilize Cherenkov light utilized? My understanding is that it gives a low penetrating light (unlike ionizing radiation or gamma rays) that would be difficult to detect outside the body.

A. The main reason my mentor and I decided to work with Cherenkov was more so to investigate what could be done with CLI. There aren't that many Cherenkov machines, so we wanted to take advantage of being so lucky to have one in the lab. It is a relatively un-investigated machine. However, I believe it does have potential because of its advantages over PET imaging like CLI's high signal to background ratios. Also, it is extremely versatile since it can be used with all of the current PET radioisotopes, as well as therapeutic radionuclides. It has a lot of variety, which is useful since cancer has an extreme variability. It is time and cost efficient since up to about five specimens may be imaged at once. The whole technique is obviously in early stages since researchers need to find specific elements and radioisotopes that work most efficiently with the CLI. Overall, the reason CLI was used in my study was to try a whole new approach to cancer detection and to see if it is worth continuing the large-scale research with CLI.

Q. The nanoparticles would attach to tumors using antibodies. Antibody labels to tumors may not be so

easy to make as tumors do mutate and may modify and alter their surface receptors. Would this be a problem for tumor detection?

A. Sadly, of course it would be a problem for tumor detection. As you said, tumors are constantly mutating to avoid the drugs and stay resistant. However, a lot of research is being done on p-glycoprotein, which is a multi-drug resistance protein. This protein is very tricky since it pumps the anticancer drugs back out of the cell once it enters the tumor. Obviously, this reduces the efficacy of the anticancer drug. The hope is that through administration of siRNA or other molecules, the protein will be degraded through mutations. This will allow more of the drug to reach the cell. Once this mechanism can be finalized, it will increase chemotherapies efficiency. Thus, the less trials of chemo are needed and the chance of the tumors modifying their surface receptors will decrease because the tumor will be destroyed much more quickly. It is a bit of a farfetched idea, but I think it is all about destroying the tumor as quickly as possible to avoid multiple mutations. That is why cancer detection is such an important field because with molecular advances, cancer can be found at much earlier and weaker stages.

Karina sees herself having a career in medicine. She is to attend Duke University this fall. She would like to research the links between biology and behavior. She wants to continue research in the area of brain cancer. At Duke she says there is a new program called Bass Connections where undergraduates work with graduate students and professors in a specific field of study. She will be part of the Brain and Society field. She says that she learned how "incredibly frustrating research can be ...but my mentor made me realize that failure is OK."

Karina laments that her science program is diminishing by the year. She believes it is a life changing event in her intellectual career. She states "Studying for a test and getting a good grade does feel nice. But, contributing towards the future of science is something I can say will have a forever impact."

We should all applaud these bright young scientist who are our future. Please stop by and chat with them at the annual dinner. One day they might contribute to our shared goal of curing disease, relieve human suffering and making people live longer and healthier lives through the application of scientific methods to medical problems facing us today.





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