What Opportunities Are Available for Resident Involvement in National Orthopedic and Subspecialty Societies?

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abstract

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As physician involvement in health policy grows, there will be an increasing need for future leaders in orthopedics. Interested orthopedic residents may be unaware of opportunities for leadership involvement in professional and subspecialty organizations. This article investigates whether national and subspecialty organizations offer membership to residents, allow residents to participate in committees, and provide opportunities for scholarly activity and mentorship. The authors surveyed 20 national orthopedic professional and subspecialty societies to evaluate the availability and cost of resident membership, meeting attendance and participation, research funding, committee membership, and mentorship opportunities.

Each society’s Web site was reviewed, and societies were contacted by phone if further inquiry was needed. Of the 20 orthopedic societies surveyed, 11 allowed resident membership. Five of 20 societies allowed residents to serve on committees, with a total of 14 total positions for residents. Four organizations provided formalized mentorship programs to residents. Although opportunities for resident involvement in subspecialty and professional societies are available in the majority of groups surveyed, the Orthopaedic Trauma Association and American Society for Surgery of the Hand provided the most comprehensive collection of opportunities. Residents should also pursue involvement in other organizations that may be more readily accessible, such as local, state, and regional orthopedic and medical societies. Increased resident participation in these organizations may help in increasing the 14 nationally available committee positions for orthopedic residents. Our orthopedic profession and societies should encourage motivated residents to pursue involvement and leadership at the national level.

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Drs Dy, Cross, Parks, and Green have no relevant financial relationships to disclose.

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The critical need for physician involvement in health policy activities and initiatives was highlighted during the recent focus on health care reform in the United States. During the discussion process and debates leading up to the signing of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons and individual state societies played a prominent role in advocating for the interests of orthopedic surgeons and their patients.

As the role of organized medicine continues to grow in the United States, there will be a continued need for leaders in orthopedic surgery. It is important for these leaders to develop managerial and leadership skills, to be familiar with committee structure and function, and to be able to devise and enact a plan of action. These skills are best learned and honed through involvement in organizational activities early on in one’s career, including during residency training. Increasing regulation of resident work hours has created unique challenges in achieving the primary goal of residency training, which is to produce competent orthopedic surgeons. In early investigations after implementation of work hour regulations, residents have reported improved quality of life and balance and pursue other academic interests, such as research. Participation in professional and subspecialty societies is another potential avenue for resident involvement, provided that residents are interested in and aware of these activities and there are sufficient opportunities available. Engagement in subspecialty organizations in residency may influence future career decisions, while participation in leadership activities may spark an interest in longer-term involvement.

To our knowledge, no previous publications have addressed the topic of resident involvement in leadership activities or subspecialty societies. In this survey of 20 national orthopedic and subspecialty organizations, we investigated whether (1) membership is available to residents, (2) committee participation is offered to residents, and (3) scholarly activities and mentorship opportunities are available to residents.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The current study involves a survey of 20 national orthopedic specialty organizations, including general orthopedic advocacy and research organizations, special interest societies, and subspecialty societies. We sought answers to the following questions:

- Is resident membership available? If so, what is the annual cost?
- Are residents provided opportunities to serve on organizational committees?
- Are residents invited to attend any regularly scheduled (ie, annual) meetings for the organization? If so, what is the cost, and how does it compare with the fees for regular members?
- Are residents allowed to present research or original work at these meetings?
- Are there research grants available for residents?
- Are there scholarships for travel to meetings or educational opportunities available for residents?
- Are there formal mentorship opportunities for residents?

The Web sites for each organization were thoroughly reviewed by 2 blinded investigators, both of whom were orthopedic surgery residents. In the event that these questions were not answered after review of the Web site, 1 of our authors, a blinded orthopedic surgery resident, contacted each organization by telephone to obtain the remaining unanswered data.

An exemption from review was obtained from our institutional review board.

RESULTS

The results from the survey are presented in the Table.

Membership and Meeting Involvement

Eleven of the 20 societies surveyed allowed residents to become members. Of these 11, 4 currently offer free membership to residents (American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons; Arthroscopy Association of North America; American Society for Surgery of the Hand; and the Pediatric Orthopaedic Society of North America [but only with proof of an upcoming pediatric fellowship]). Of note, the American Society for Surgery of the Hand charges an application fee of $75 with no further fees for the duration of residency and fellowship. The remaining organizations charge between $50 and $100 per year. The Hip Society and the Knee Society offer membership by invitation only to orthopedic surgeons who have made substantial contributions to the fields of arthroplasty.

All 15 of the organizations and societies that held open annual meetings allowed residents to attend. The Orthopaedic Research and Education Foundation does not have annual meetings. Residents are not permitted to attend the closed annual meetings of the American Shoulder and Elbow Society, the Hip Society, or the Knee Society (but may attend the annual Specialty Day during the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons Annual Meeting).

Attendance at the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons and Arthroscopy Association of North America annual meetings are free for residents. The American Association of Hip and Knee Surgeons, American Orthopaedic Foot and Ankle Society, and American Society for Surgery of the Hand all provide scholarship opportunities for residents to attend a resident-specific course or conference section and gain complimentary attendance to their respective annual meeting. Registration fees for the Ruth Jackson Orthopaedic Society, J. Robert Gladden Orthopaedic Society, Musculoskeletal Tumor Society, North American Spine Society, Scoliosis Research Society, and Pediatric Orthopaedic Society of North America meetings are reduced for residents compared to full members. Residents are permitted to present research (that has been accepted) at all of the open annual meetings except for the Pediatric Orthopaedic Society of North America.
Committee Involvement

Five of the 20 organizations surveyed allow residents to serve on committees (American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, J. Robert Gladden Orthopaedic Society, American Society for Surgery of the Hand, Orthopaedic Trauma Association, and North American Spine Society). Of these groups, this information was obtained via telephone for 2 groups (the American Society for Surgery of the Hand and the North American Spine Society). Based on our research, there are a total of 14 committee positions available for residents in these organizations. The Orthopaedic Trauma Association has 1 resident position on its Education Committee, whereas the J. Robert Gladden Orthopaedic Society offers the opportunity for 1 resident to serve as a voting member on its Board of Directors. The American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons offers resident

### Table

**Survey of 20 Orthopedic Societies**

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**Abbreviations:** AAHKS, American Association of Hip and Knee Surgeons; AANA, Arthroscopy Association of North America; AAOS, American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgery; AOA, American Orthopaedic Association; AOFAS, American Orthopaedic Foot & Ankle Society; AOSM, American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine; ASES, American Shoulder and Elbow Surgeons; ASSH, American Society for Surgery of the Hand; JRGOS, J. Robert Gladden Orthopaedic Society; MTS, Musculoskeletal Tumor Society; NASS, North American Spine Society; ORF, Orthopaedic Research and Education Foundation; ORS, Orthopaedic Research Society; OTA, Orthopaedic Trauma Association; POSNA, Pediatric Orthopaedic Society of North America; RIOS, Ruth Jackson Orthopaedic Society; SRS, Scoliosis Research Society.

⁶Information obtained via phone call. All other information was obtained from Web sites.

³One-time $75 application fee.

⁴Scholarship available.

⁶With proof of fellowship.
members the opportunity to apply for positions on 11 of its committees through its online Committee Appointment Program.

**Scholarly Activities and Mentorship**

Ten of the 20 organizations surveyed provide funding for resident research projects through competitive grants. In addition, the Orthopaedic Trauma Association and the Hip Society provide an award for completed resident research projects, whereas the Hip Society provides an award for the best paper submitted by a resident or fellow.

The J. Robert Gladden Orthopaedic Society, Arthroscopy Association of North America, Orthopaedic Trauma Association, and AO North America all provide opportunities for residents to attend national meetings and provide scholarship opportunities for residents to attend educational experiences (aside from annual meetings). As mentioned above, the American Society for Surgery of the Hand, American Orthopaedic Foot and Ankle Society, and American Association of Hip and Knee Surgeons provide opportunities for residents to obtain funding for travel to educational experiences (aside from annual meetings). The reader should note that our study is limited by its scope of investigation. To provide a general overview of what is available to orthopedic surgery residents on a national level, activities within regional or state orthopedic societies were not investigated. Furthermore, a seat on the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education’s orthopedic surgery residency review committee is included, but whether societies provided opportunities for (1) membership to residents, (2) committee participation by residents, and (3) scholarly activity and mentorship for residents.

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**DISCUSSION**

The recent debate on health care reform in the United States highlighted the need for orthopedic surgeon involvement in leadership activities to advocate for our patients and profession. It is helpful to develop these leadership skills during the early stages of a career. Although not all residents will have the time or the interest to pursue interests outside of the rigor of a residency in orthopedic surgery, those individuals with interest in a specific subspecialty or leadership involvement should be made aware of the opportunities available. In our investigation, we sought to answer whether societies provided opportunities for (1) membership to residents, (2) committee participation by residents, and (3) scholarly activity and mentorship for residents.

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dic Association Emerging Leaders Program, provide an excellent formalized mentorship program to a greater number of residents. It is the experience gained in these organized settings that will help train the next generation of orthopedic surgeons for an expanded role in health care policy.

Furthermore, resident involvement in subspecialty and special interest orthopedic organizations can provide unique educational opportunities. Appraisal of scientific evidence and systems-based practices are both core competencies for all Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education-accredited residency programs. Recent work hour limits create a challenge for program directors to include comprehensive training on interpreting and conducting research in an already compressed clinical curriculum. Bederman and colleagues have called on specialty compressed clinical curriculum. Bedermaning and conducting research in an already complex clinical curriculum is the experience gained in these organized settings that will help train the next generation of orthopedic surgeons for an expanded role in health care policy.

It is through positive early career experiences where individuals can gain the skills and knowledge to become a leader amongst his or her peers. Our orthopedic profession and societies should encourage motivated residents to pursue involvement and leadership at the national level. Other opportunities on a regional or state level should also be explored in future research studies.

REFERENCES