



The WREN Review

Wisconsin Research and Education Network

January 2008

Winter issue

From the Director

Welcome to the winter edition of the WREN Review. I hope everyone is staying safe and warm.

Our most exciting recent development has been finalizing the details for the WREN Convocation of Practices May 1 and 2 in the Wisconsin Dells. John Hickner, MD will be our plenary speaker. John was a member of the first national practice-based research network (PBRN), the Ambulatory Sentinel Practice Network, and Director of the American Academy of Family Physicians National Research Network. In addition to speaking, he will lead us through a discussion of the future of WREN, focusing on the types of research projects and topics of interest to WREN members. This exercise will give the Steering Committee and me guidance regarding the projects we should engage in as we are approached by outside researchers and as we seek funding opportunities. You can read more about plans for the upcoming Convocation in the article on page 2.

In other news, we still have about \$10,000 of funding available for a WREN member to conduct a small project related to obesity or exercise. The funding can be used to pay for WREN staff time, patient incentives, or a small amount of materials or equipment such as pedometers. For those of you who are interested in research but don't have previous research experience, this is a great opportunity to give it a try with WREN help at every phase of the process.

As we now have most of our currently funded projects up and running smoothly, we have been able to focus on analyzing data from previous studies and writing manuscripts. We recently submitted one manuscript for Jon Temte's Bioterrorism and Influenza Surveillance Network study and we are about to start writing a paper on the health literacy focus group study.

We look forward to seeing you at the Convocation of Practices. We have funding to pay most of the expenses for WREN members and one staff member from their practice. However, we do not have unlimited funds and cannot pay for all WREN members and their staff, so please sign up soon to lock in your reimbursement. This is your opportunity to have a significant influence on future WREN projects for the next few years. We want to hear from you!!

Stay warm and remember that we have a little more daylight each day and spring is not that far away.

-Paul Smith, MD, WREN Director

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SAVE THE DATE!

WREN Convocation of Practices

Thursday and Friday May 1 - 2, 2008

Great Wolf Lodge, Wisconsin Dells

CME credit offered, no registration fee

www.fammed.wisc.edu/research/wren/meetings

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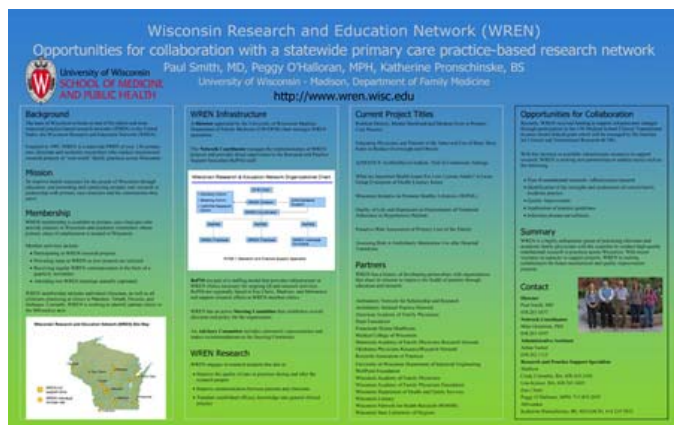
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Improving Wisconsin's Health: Prevention, Policy and Priorities for Research

In late November, WREN staff attended a conference hosted by the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute (UWPHI) entitled "Improving Wisconsin's Health: Prevention, Policy and Priorities for Research."

The UWPHI serves as a central hub for applied public health and health policy within the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health as well as a bridge to public health and health policy practitioners in the state (<http://www.pophealth.wisc.edu/UWPHI/about.htm>). The conference covered topics including health promotion and disease prevention, public health data for state and local decision making, and improving population health through better access to health care. Approximately 200 professionals from all branches of interdisciplinary health care teams and policy-making organizations throughout the state of Wisconsin attended.



WREN poster presentation at UWPHI conference

The event proved to be a successful networking opportunity and promotional tool for WREN. At the conference, WREN Director Paul Smith and Coordinator Mike Grasmick presented a poster outlining opportunities for collaboration with WREN. Research and Practice Support Specialists (REPSS) Lisa Kietzer and Katie Pronschinske were on hand to distribute take-home versions of the poster, direct conference attendees to the poster, provide information about WREN, and to network with potential collaborators.

In the future, we will continue to seek out opportunities like this one to both promote our work and to encourage collaboration with WREN.

2008 WREN Convocation of Practices

The 2008 WREN Convocation of Practices will be held May 1 and 2, 2008 at the Great Wolf Lodge in Wisconsin Dells. Notices with registration materials have been sent to WREN members and Friends of WREN. If you have not received this information and are interested in attending, please follow this link to find registration forms:

www.fammed.wisc.edu/research/wren/meetings.

We are passionate about adding two new features to this year's Convocation. First, we value everyone's participation and will offer a travel stipend to WREN members. Secondly, we will have the expert guidance of Dr. John Hickner to lead us through a facilitated session on developing our future research agenda. Dr. Hickner is a Professor of Family Medicine at the University of Chicago, and a leading authority in practice-based research. He has over twenty-five years of experience and leadership, beginning with rural practice in the Michigan Upper Peninsula followed by the development of several practice-based research networks in the United States.

Later in the meeting, we will hear from Drs. David Kindig and Pat Remington from the UW Department of Population Health. They will talk about the health of Wisconsin and where improvements would have the most impact on the health of our population. Also, we will have a split session during which clinic support staff will meet with the Research and Education Practice Support Specialists (REPSS, formerly called PEEAs) for a general discussion about how to support research and quality improvement projects. At the same time, clinicians will participate in a discussion about their specific research interests.

Now is truly the future all of us have hoped for; we have infrastructure support and are well positioned to move into new research areas. Also, this will be a great opportunity for you to meet our new staff members and to network with other WREN members. We encourage you to join us!

2007 Primary Care Research Forum II



Forum participants and presenters Julia Yates, Mia Croyle, and Christina Lightbourn

On November 1 and 2, more than 40 people attended the 2007 Annual Wisconsin Primary Care Research Forum II sponsored by WREN, the UW Department of Family Medicine, the Wisconsin Academy of Family Physicians, and the Medical College of Wisconsin Department of Family and Community Medicine.

This was the second research forum this year and it again proved to be a successful venue for the presentation of Wisconsin primary care research and interaction of Wisconsin primary care researchers at all levels.

After an introduction from WREN Director Paul Smith, the forum began with a morning plenary session by Marc Drezner, MD, who talked about the University of Wisconsin Clinical and Translational Science Award. This award is being used by the School of Medicine and Public Health to align resources to create an environment that facilitates transformation of research at the university into a continuum extending from investigation to discovery to translation into practice. These initiatives include a new research culture and recognition of a “two-way street” between the university and Wisconsin communities which together will fulfill the “Wisconsin Idea,” a concept that links the efforts at UW to the well-being of the residents of Wisconsin communities and beyond.

Later in the day, David Hahn, MD provided an explanation of Hill’s epidemiological criteria and how the evidence of *Chlamydia pneumoniae* has a causal association with asthma. Based on Hill’s criteria for evidence of causation, WREN is currently conducting a clinical trial called AZMATICS (AZithroMycin Asthma Trial In Community Settings).

The third plenary presentation was made by Syed Ahmed, MD, DrPH who discussed the concepts, challenges, and current status of community-based participatory research. Strategies were discussed to better link community ideas into an academic culture framework.



John Beasley discusses quality of work life for family physicians

Research Form II participants enjoyed the diversity of presentations, break-out sessions and workshops. In 2008, WREN will expand the scope of the forum by inviting presentations on quality improvement in addition to research studies. We anticipate continued growth in the forum through participation of medical students, residents, fellows, academic/community physicians and WREN partners throughout the state.

SAVE THE DATE!! The next research forum will be November 6 and 7, 2008 to coincide with the Wisconsin Academy of Family Physicians Annual Meeting at the Wilderness Resort in Wisconsin Dells. WREN will issue a call for abstracts later this year for individuals interested in presenting a paper or poster on completed research or works in progress on any topic relating to primary care research and quality improvement.

WREN FEATURE PROJECT

Proactive Risk Assessment of Primary Care of the Elderly

A hazard in patient care is defined as anything that is associated with the probability of error or injury. In this innovative WREN study, a collaborative team of experts in safety engineering and primary care will use proactive risk assessment methods to 1) identify hazards in the primary care of elderly patients, 2) conduct a proactive risk assessment of the identified hazards, and 3) compile a report detailing the documented hazards, the proactive assessment results, and suggested approaches for eliminating identified hazards.

WREN will recruit 15 physicians in a variety of practice settings. Safety experts will observe physicians providing patient care, and will record observed and suspected hazards. They will also shadow at least one elderly patient per physician to collect data from the patient's point of view. Physicians will be asked to report noted hazards during a two week period. Finally, WREN will conduct separate focus groups of physicians and patients to generate in-depth discussions of hazards in primary care of the elderly.

The role of primary care as the hub of healthcare leads to tremendous complexity that makes it likely to have a high prevalence of safety hazards. The elderly are a vulnerable group at greater risk of being injured as a result of safety hazards. Identifying hazards in primary care of the elderly will allow healthcare organizations to correct problems before adverse outcomes occur, make sense of their safety situation, and prioritize patient safety efforts.

This study is led by Ben-Tzion Karsh, PhD in the UW Department of Industrial Engineering. The investigators (among them former WREN Directors Dr. John Beasley and Dr. Jon Temte, and current Director Dr. Paul Smith) have a history of successful collaboration in primary care patient safety.

Physicians who are interested in participating in this study should contact Lisa Kietzer at 608-263-3403 or lisa.kietzer@fammed.wisc.edu.



*Principal Investigator
Bentzi Karsh*

Project Update: AZMATICS

AZMATICS (AZithroMycin Asthma Trial In Community Settings) is a clinical effectiveness trial of the azalide acrolide azithromycin as adjunctive therapy for asthma conducted in primary care practices nationwide. This trial is based on an emerging body of evidence for chronic *Chlamydia pneumoniae* infection in asthma, and builds upon positive results of a pilot trial that was successfully conducted by WREN.

About 50 subjects have now been randomized and 16 have completed the study. The compliance rate is 61% for subjects completing the final survey that asks about asthma symptoms and quality of life. Because this last survey is important, we have deployed a two-fold strategy to increase compliance: 1) a patient reminder system to encourage compliance, sent one week before the survey, and 2) more aggressive follow up with study physicians to make contact with and encourage subjects to complete surveys.

The Wisconsin Network for Health Research (WiNHR) has agreed to support the AZMATICS project at the Marshfield Clinic and at Aurora Sinai Medical Center. Dr. David Hahn, the principal investigator, has trained study physicians and support staff at both locations. The clinics have received all study materials, and patient recruiting at these locations will start in the next two months.

Physicians and potentially eligible patients who are interested in learning more about AZMATICS may contact Dr. Hahn at dlhahn@wisc.edu or david.hahn@deancare.com.

PROJECT UPDATES

What are Important Issues for Low Literate Adults? A Focus Group Evaluation of Health Literacy Issues

In collaboration with Wisconsin Literacy, Inc. and three community-based Wisconsin literacy councils, WREN staff conducted six focus groups of low literate adults to explore how low literacy impacts their health and health care. All six focus groups have been transcribed and analyzed to identify major and minor themes, and WREN staff are preparing the results for publication.

Complexity in Family Practice: A WREN Study

The aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between the number of medical problems, physician mental workload, and the likelihood of medical error in family practice clinics. The data collection phase of this study is nearing completion. The UW Health Wingra Clinic and the Lake Tomah Clinic have completed data collection, and two additional WREN full support clinics, Mauston's Mile Bluff Clinic and Medical Associates Clinic in Dubuque, have received training and are ready to begin collecting study data.

Principal investigator Jon Temte, MD, PhD, and WREN staff have been sharing early results with participating clinics and other interested primary care clinicians during visits to clinics, and at conferences including the Wisconsin Primary Care Research Forum and the North American Primary Research Group meeting. In March, Dr. Temte will present a talk on the study at the AAFP National Research Network's Convocation of Practices in Colorado Springs.

Educating Physicians in the Value and Use of BMI to Reduce Overweight and Obesity

The purpose of this study, launched in April 2007, is to test the significance of using the AAFP's Americans in Motion toolkit in application toward patients' weight control and obesity reduction. In December, WREN completed the follow-up survey to WAFP and WREN members, and will now focus on analyzing the data to determine the perceived usefulness of the tool kit.

Wisconsin Initiative to Promote Healthy Lifestyles (WIPHL)

WIPHL is a federally funded screening, brief intervention, referral and treatment services (SBIRT) program designed to address substance abuse in Wisconsin. Program service delivery began in March, 2007. As of December 31, a total of 31,339 patients received brief screening services at the 20 participating WIPHL clinics. After a successful first year, the program plans to focus on improving service delivery in 2008 and will work with clinics to identify strategies to enable them to continue providing WIPHL services after the five year funding cycle ends.

Quality of Life and Depression as Determinants of Treatment Adherence in Hypertensive Patients

Leonelo Bautista MD, MPH, DrPh, of the UW-Madison Department of Population Health Sciences is the principal investigator on this study designed to assess whether symptoms of depression and lower quality of life affect the likelihood that patients will continue to take their antihypertensive medication.

The study is now in full swing. Osceola Medical Center recruited the first patients in January, and Lake Tomah Clinic and the UW Health Monona, McFarland and Odana Atrium Clinics in Madison will all begin patient recruitment in a few weeks. Participating patients will be followed for one year, and will receive a \$20 incentive for each study visit they complete.



Leonelo Bautista, PI and WREN staff visiting Osceola Medical Center in November

WREN Steering Committee

Dennis Baumgardner, MD, St. Luke's Family Practice Center (General Member Representative, Steering Committee Chair)

Jim Davis, MD, MS, UW Department of Family Medicine (UW Department of Family Medicine Interim Chair)

Rod Erickson, MD, Lake Tomah Clinic (General Member Representative)

Kari Lathrop-Capaul, MD, Affinity Medical Group (General Member Representative and Steering Committee Chairperson Elect)

Mary Beth Plane, PhD, UW Department of Family Medicine (UW Department of Family Medicine Director of Research Services)

Ken Schellhase, MD, Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW Department of Family and Community Medicine Representative)

Eric Schoville, BA, UW Department of Family Medicine (UW Department of Family Medicine Information Services Representative)

Paul Smith, MD, UW Department of Family Medicine, UW Health Belleville Clinic (WREN Director)

Jon Temte, MD, PhD, UW Department of Family Medicine, UW Health Wingra Family Medical Center (UW Department of Family Medicine Representative and Steering Committee Secretary)

Paul Treder, APNP, Waushara Family Physicians (General Member Representative)

Steering Committee Meeting November 1, 2007

WREN Steering Committee members Paul Smith, Dennis Baumgardner, Mary Beth Plane, and Kari Lathrop-Capaul met in November at Wisconsin Dells.

The Committee discussed current funding for WREN meetings. Currently, we have meeting funds in the ICTR-CAP budget but want to consider adding to the funds through WAFP, UW DFM and MCW. WREN meeting costs can be offset by obtaining a credit card number from meeting registrants so that we may bill individuals who later decide not to attend. This fee will cover fixed costs that WREN has incurred in the past related to no-shows, such as conference room costs, meals and lodging.

The WREN Convocation of Practices will be held May 1-2 at the Great Wolf Lodge, Wisconsin Dells. WREN has budgeted funds to help offset expenses for members to attend. Finally, statewide foundations were discussed as new sources of funding for WREN and possibly WinHR.

Membership update

Recently, we completed the effort to verify and update WREN membership files. Currently, we have 82 WREN members who have joined at either the General or Affiliate level. Please contact network coordinator Mike Grasmick at michael.grasmick@fammed.wisc.edu or 608-265-4597 if you are interested in becoming a WREN member.

New name for WREN staff

Last fall, WREN staff voted to change the title Practice Enhancement and Education Assistant to better reflect the role of the position. PEEAS are now called REPPS, short for Research and Practice Support Specialist. The name may have changed, but the role is the same. REPPS continue to support ongoing research and quality improvement projects at WREN clinics.

PRINS 1 and 2

Recall that PRINS 1 and 2 are surveys of clinician/practice demographics and patient visit information, respectively. We are in the process of making modifications to PRINS I and anticipate launching this survey with WREN members by email in February. REPPS will assist their assigned full-support practices with the survey.

The WREN Review is published quarterly. If you have questions or article suggestions please contact Peggy O'Halloran at peggy.ohalloran@fammed.wisc.edu or 715-855-2057