Looking beyond the K: Practical strategies for having a research career without a K award

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Disclosure

• None of the workshop leaders have any financial conflicts of interest to disclose
Learning objectives

• To understand what alternatives exist to K awards for initial funding
• To learn about career paths that do not involve career development funding
• To see how alternative paths may be particularly relevant for hospitalists who are doing medical education or quality improvement

Outline

• Introductions: 5 min All
• Case studies: 15 min Karen Wilson
• Alternate funding sources: 20 min Samir Shah
• Skill acquisition: 20 min Ron Teufel
• Wrap up and questions 15 min All
Case #1: Sarah

- 8 years as a pediatric hospitalist
- Administrative roles in her division
- Interest in inpatient asthma management
- Program has MPH available
Case #2: Mark

• Graduating chief resident
• Interested in quality improvement
• Completed a strong QI project during residency

Case #3: Kevin

• 5 years as a community hospitalist
• Not previously interested in research
• Notices a PRIS study that looks interesting
Case #4: Karen

- Research before medical school
- Completed general pediatric fellowship
- Applied for K:
  - 1st round: 40th %ile
- Offered leadership role precluding 70% time for research

ALTERNATE FUNDING SOURCES
Academic Pediatric Association

• Young Investigator Awards
  – Young Investigator Award- $10,000
    • APA funds general pediatric issues, including EM and PHM
  – 2 page proposals due in September
  – Top proposals selected for second round
  – 10 page proposal due in December

American Medical Association

• Seed Grant Program
  – Medical students and residents
  – $2,500-$5,000
  – Specific topics (cardiovascular diseases, second-hand smoke, etc)
Other sources

- Disease-specific organizations
  - National Kidney Foundation
  - American Heart Association
  - American Lung Association

NIH Loan Repayment Program

- Doesn’t actually fund projects, but it’s worth pursuing
- Repays loan debt up to $35,000/year for up to 4 years
- Designed to encourage people to do pediatric research
- Awarded based on likelihood of continuing research career
- Requires a personal statement and research plan
- Due in November
- Usually written in fellowship
Other Federal Funding sources

• AHRQ - Health Services Research and Patient Safety
• CDC
• MCHB

National private funding sources

• Robert Wood Johnson
  – Clinical Scholars Program
  – Faculty Scholars Program (Sandy Jee)
  – Grants
• Commonwealth Fund
• Gerber Foundation (focus on infants)
• Thrasher Research Foundation
• Gates Foundation
• Disease specific foundations:
  – AHA, ALA, ADA
Local foundations

• Local AHA, ALA, ADA chapters
• Local and State health departments
What kind of skills?

- Research team and teamwork
  - Mentor, peer-mentor/collaborators, research group
- Familiarity with available data
  - HCUP, PHIS, local EMR
- Evidence-based medicine/literature evaluation
- Statistical Analysis
- Quality Improvement Methodology
- Qualitative methods
- Writing manuscripts (e.g., reviewing)
- Grantsmanship

How can I identify my needed skills?

- What area interests?
  - Research or QI
- What compels you?
  - Stats, EHRs, writing
- Did you submit a grant but not funded?
  - Identify what can be done without $ and what skills needed
- Who do you want to be in 5-10 years?
  - We all want to be Samir Shah
Level of Curriculum

• Differing curriculum exits
  – Time, resources, structure,
  – *Vary in skill development potential*
• Fellowship options
• Graduate degrees
• Courses – QI pre-courses, APA RSP, etc
• Workshops – PAS, PHM
• It is honestly endless.... Be persistent in your pursuit of knowledge!

Workshops

• OK go ahead and check a box  
  – Targeted workshop attendance (e.g., qualitative)
• Topic broad
• Depth is limited – it’s a sample
• Opportunities at PAS, PHM, Academy Health, etc
Courses/Pre-Courses

• PAS APA QI Pre-course
• APA Research Scholar Program
• AAP PHM Fellows Conference
• Quality improvement courses
  – Salt Lake City, Cincinnati, and others
• Endless

Degree Programs

• Most universities have additional degree programs – MPH, MS, MSCR, etc
• Depth of knowledge
  – Represented with extra letters in your title
• Tuition
• Time
Fellowship Training

- Subspecialty including PHM
  - Programs vary so pick one that fits your career vision
  - May include a degree
- Health Services Research, Quality Improvement, Health Policy, etc
  - Often include a degree
- Program leaders have already figured out tuition, time, and curriculum
- Salary
- Pick program that matches skills you want
- My bias... fellowship is the easy way to get trained

Common pitfalls

- Mentorship
  - Finding your mentorship team
    - Clinical content expertise
    - Epidemiological expertise
    - Quantitative or qualitative methods expertise
- Protected time
- Access to research support services
- Others?
Framework for discussion

• What are their options?
• What are the pros and cons for different options?
• What do they need to proceed?
• What kind of mentors do they need?
• What are the next steps?

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IT’S YOUR STORY… PICK YOUR DIRECTION
WRAP UP AND QUESTIONS