



PM&R
MEDICAL STUDENT
INTEREST GROUP
GUIDEBOOK

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BACKGROUND



Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (PM&R) is a specialty branch of medicine emphasizing on (1) diagnosis and treatment of musculoskeletal injuries and pain syndromes, (2) electrodiagnostic medicine, and (3) rehabilitation of patients with severe impairments.

National demand for rehabilitation services has been increasing steadily over the years. The specialty has grown in popularity in the U.S. and abroad. Between the years 2004 and 2008, the number of U.S. PM&R residency positions increased by 8%. For the 2009 NRMP Residency Match, 89 ACGME-accredited training programs offered 288 spots.

Unfortunately, medical students often have little exposure to the specialty early in their careers. The solution is to have a PM&R interest group in the school to help increase students' awareness of the field and educate future physicians on the specialty's role in providing optimal, quality healthcare to patients.

PURPOSE



This document was created to guide students who want to establish or maintain a medical school interest group for Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation (PM&R). Regardless of whether you have a well-established PM&R department at your medical school, it is possible to have a lively PM&R interest group. There are many resources available and, with the use of this guide, your PM&R interest group can help medical students better understand the field and successfully match into the residency.

The following are generalized goals for a PM&R interest group:

1. To raise awareness of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation's role in patient care
2. To educate the medical student population on PM&R topics
3. To create opportunities for student participation in PM&R activities
4. To serve as a resource for students interested in pursuing PM&R

INITIAL START-UP



Medical School Policies

Every medical school has its own policies and procedures for initiating an interest group. Consult your Dean of Student Affairs to see how to get started. Try sending a school-wide email or setting up an initial meeting to gauge the level of interest among students.

Faculty Advisor

Your medical school may require a faculty advisor to oversee the interest group. Even if not required, having one can be extremely valuable, especially when setting up group activities and meetings. Additional advisors can also be sought and consulted via email if you need further assistance.

Contact the Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation department to find a faculty volunteer. If no one is available or if your medical school does not have a PM&R department, it is still possible to recruit a faculty member as many other departments (e.g. Orthopedics, Neurosurgery, Neurology, etc.) may have a physiatrist on their faculty, or may have an affiliation with a community physiatrist. If not, these departments may be able to identify a faculty physician who is involved with rehabilitation and willing to act as an advisor.

Funding

Food and supply are the primary expenses for a student-run interest group. The starting capital can be requested from the Student Council, which allocates a set amount to medical student groups each year. Fundraising can help cover additional costs. Soliciting your PM&R department is also a possibility. Depending on your school's policies,

funding from “outside” sources, such as private companies, may be possible.

MEETINGS



Time and Place

The best way to gather a large audience is to schedule meetings at school and during regular class hours. Obtain a copy of all class schedules from the Registrar and pick a date when there are no important exams within 2-3 days. Another trick to maximize attendance is to have the meeting right after a mandatory class. If you plan to serve food, finding an open slot during lunchtime would be ideal. Any other time or place will decrease the attendance rate and you may lose out on students whose interest may be piqued by listening to a lecture or taking part in an event.

Officer Elections

Officer elections are usually held during the first months of the academic year. Positions traditionally up for election include: President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer. The President is usually a fourth-year medical student who has more knowledge about the field, has more faculty and resident connections through clerkships, and is applying for a residency position. Keep in mind that third-year students are usually too busy with clerkship obligations to take on significant responsibility. A first-year or second-year student may make for a good Vice-President because he/she would be intimately in touch with the basic science classes. Consider a position-sharing plan (i.e., Co-Presidents and Co-Vice Presidents) so students can cover for each other.



Frequency

Board members should meet exclusively and discuss matters at a minimum of three times per year. The first would be an introductory meeting, where members make up an outline of activities for the year and distribute responsibilities. The second meeting is an opportunity for members to evaluate their progress and make adjustments for the future. Newly elected officers should meet with the Board in the spring to ensure smooth transition into the following year. Frequent communication among board members is encouraged.

The interest group should aim to host three events during the academic year (from a combination of annual meetings, lectures and activities). Depending on the leadership and participants' interest level, you may set up more events during the year.

Food

Events with sponsored food often draw plenty of medical students. You should reserve funds for this purpose when planning meetings and activities. Consult with the Student Affairs office on receiving extramural sponsorship of meals from pharmaceutical and medical instrument companies. If this is allowed, track down representatives using the company websites and visiting local franchise operations. Through this course, you can afford to provide extravagant meals and make your PM&R meeting a hit.

Advertisement

Explore all venues to advertise your meetings: have flyers, send emails, write on blackboards and make a class announcement. Medical students are busy and often forget the date. Send reminders the day before and the day of the meeting. Write the interest group's name or post a banner during the event so everybody knows who did the great job.



PROPOSED ACTIVITIES



During Class Hours

- Orientation week
 - Booth representing PM&R interest group
- Informational sessions
 - Format
 - Attendings vs. residents vs. patients
 - Presentation vs. Panel
 - Topics of Interest
 - Introduction to PM&R
 - Getting into a PM&R residency
 - Life of a physiatrist
 - Disability awareness
 - Subspecialty topics
 - neuro/cardiac/pulmonary rehab
 - SCI & TBI
 - musculoskeletal
 - spine
 - sports
 - pediatrics
 - occupational medicine
 - prosthetics and orthotics (P&O)
 - electrodiagnostics
- Workshops
 - Disability simulation
 - Rehab-Patient-for-the-Day (e.g. performing tasks with one arm, taping fingers together and trying to write, feeding partner water who cannot speak, etc)
 - Day-in-the-Wheelchair
 - Anatomy
 - Functional anatomy review

- Physical examination
- Ultrasound workshop
- Peripheral joint injections using joint models
- Prosthetics and Orthotics Demonstrations

Outside Class Hours

- Shadow Program
 - Academic attendings
 - Private practitioners
 - Summer clerkships
- Sporting event coverage
- PM&R Journal Club
- Research involvement
 - AAP Rehabilitation Research Experience for Medical Students (RREMS)
- Volunteering Opportunities
 - Summer Camps (e.g., MDA)
 - Local Rehabilitation Centers
 - Races for the Disabled
- Disability Awareness Movie Nights
 - Murderball (*for SCI*)
 - HBO's COMA (*for TBI*)
 - Terra Incognita (*for stem cell research*)
- Attend PM&R resident's didactics
- PM&R Student Clinic

Conferences

- Association of Academic Physiatrists
- American Academy of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation

Miscellaneous Activities

- PM&R Alumni Database



Additional Suggestions

Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation often works in cooperation with other medical services (e.g., Neurology, Neurosurgery, Orthopedics, Rheumatology, Sports Medicine, Pain Management, and Hospice Care). Combine resources and reach out to an even greater audience by hosting joint events with other student interest groups. You can also network with other medical schools' PM&R student interest groups to brainstorm additional ideas or to cooperate on projects, as many have their own websites. The Association of Academic Physiatrists (AAP) and American Academy of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation (AAMPR) websites both have information specific to medical students and links for other resources.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES



American Academy of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation (AAPMR)
www.aapmr.org

American Medical Student Association (AMSA)
www.amsa.org

Association of Academic Physiatrists (AAP)
www.physiatry.org

Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC)
www.aamc.org/mededportal

National Resident Matching Program (NRMP)
www.nrmp.org

