

Prehospital Care Research Forum Advances Evidence-Based Medicine in EMS

By Christopher T. Boyer D.B.A., NR-P, FP-C and Todd J. LeDuc MS, CFO, FIFirE

Modern-day EMS practitioners are faced with the daunting task of providing quality care to their patients on a daily basis while also ensuring they remain aware of the latest trends in evidenced-based care. Evidence-based practice, which has its foundation in research, is the standard of care in modern medicine, with both providers and decision makers seeking to provide effective, targeted therapies for patients. Experienced practitioners know all too well how evidence-based medicine can change or discredit the practice of medicine in the field. The application of pneumatic anti-shock garments to hypotensive trauma patients was once a well-accepted therapy that research has found to be ineffective. More recently, research has called into question the routine immobilization of trauma patients. On the positive side, research has shown that continuous quality CPR improves survival rates, leading to changes in resuscitation strategies.

While the practice of medicine is continually improving thanks to evidence-based medicine, original research conducted in the prehospital setting is lagging behind. The care protocols delivered by prehospital practitioners are generally derived through trial and error,



or by adapting hospital therapies to the prehospital environment. Yet the hospital environment differs substantially from working in the field. Whether by the side of the road, in a patient's home or at the scene of a disaster, EMS practitioners often have limited medical and personnel resources; deal with challenges including a non-sterile, poorly lit, cold, hot or wet environment; and have to adjust to rapidly changing circumstances. It is not safe to assume that therapies proven effective in a hospital will also be effective in the prehospital environment.

Using Science to Advance EMS

The mission of the Prehospital Care Research Forum (PCRF) is to promote, educate and disseminate prehospital research conducted at all provider levels. PCRF believes in challenging the status quo and using science to advance EMS. Established in 1992 by the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) Center for Prehospital Care, PCRF has been leading

the charge for evidence-based practice in prehospital care for over two decades. While out-of-hospital research has been physician-led, PCRF hopes to educate, mentor and empower EMS practitioners to contribute to research, and to conduct our own studies, on practices that impact our profession and our patients.

The mission of the Prehospital Care Research Forum (PCRF) is to promote, educate and disseminate prehospital research conducted at all provider levels.

Conducting and Evaluating Evidence

To accomplish its education mission, PCRF holds workshops and webinars, and offers mentoring and a free online

education module, Research 101. With 4 hours of content, Research 101 is hosted by Fisdap® (fisdap.net/research101) and serves as an introduction to the 12 steps of research for EMS practitioners at all levels.

Once a year, PCRf issues a call for abstracts. More than 30 experienced advisors peer-review the abstracts to evaluate their methods, scientific rigor, originality and impact. Only the best of the best are selected for oral presentations. Authors are given 15 minutes to present abstracts related to EMS education at the National Association of EMS Educators (NAEMSE) annual symposium. Research related to clinical practices and systems is presented at the International Scientific Symposium, held in conjunction with EMS World Expo. This year's deadline is April 30, 2018.

Recently the PCRf accepted its first abstracts in Spanish. These were peer-reviewed and presented at the EMS World Americas conference in Bogota, Colombia.

Ways to Get Started

If you're interested in learning more about how to conduct EMS research, a great place to start is to participate in a monthly podcast – the PCRf Journal Club – hosted by Drs. Megan Corry and Tony Fernandez. Held the second Monday of the month at noon CST, the podcast (available at fisdap.net/podcasts/pcrf) offers the PCRf's critical evaluation of current research, bridging the gap between researchers and EMS practitioners. The goal



is to create an EMS community that has the skills to critically evaluate evidence, and to promote healthy and respectful discussions that challenge present and future prehospital care practices. Participants can either call in or log in through the internet, with interactive engagement facilitated via an online chat window or verbal discussion.

We encourage all EMS practitioners to get involved! Check out our website (cpc.mednet.ucla.edu/pcrf) to learn more about PCRf or tune into our next podcast. Your involvement is vital, not only to the success of the forum, but also to the future of EMS.

Tuition Discount for NAEMT Members |



Columbia Southern University offers completely online degrees for EMS professionals interested in taking the next step in their career. CSU's coursework covers relevant topics within the emergency medical services industry including community relations, EMS communications, risk management, public safety and more.

Learn more about our online EMSA degrees at ColumbiaSouthern.edu/EMSA.

Always Forward ➔



ColumbiaSouthern.edu | 877.347.6050

