

Committee Awards

From the Research Committee

Helfer Society Career Development Grant for Child Abuse Pediatrics Research

Peer-reviewed research is the currency of the house of medicine, and the life's blood of clinical practice. In order to continue the development of the field of child abuse pediatrics as a medical subspecialty, it is essential to nurture each subsequent generation of physician researchers. With these aims in mind, we propose to use the funds from the Helfer Small Grant Program to support a competitive grant program for Helfer members planning a research career.

By providing research support to fellows and other Helfer members without established extramural support, this small grant will provide early support for worthwhile research in child abuse pediatrics. While the measurable result of this program will be data submitted to the Helfer annual meeting, the intangible results will be much greater than this. Unsuccessful applicants will nevertheless benefit from a chance to learn the format for NIH and other federal submissions, and will receive comments from experienced grant reviewers. We anticipate that both successful and unsuccessful applicants will go on to receive further extra-mural funding. In addition to training the next generation of physician researchers, this small grant will also give experience to the next generation of research mentors. The prestige of the awarded grant will serve as an introduction as the early career scientist is mentored in each stage of the project (application, research, presentation).

While all funds from the Helfer Small Grant will be used for the research project itself, members of the research committee will be offering in-kind contributions by reviewing the grant proposals, offering critical commentary and ensuring the completion of program requirements. Though each applicant will outline their own mentorship plan using mentorship from their own institution, they will have access to ongoing mentorship and assistance as possible from the Research Committee.

From the Conference Committee and the Public Relations Committee

Public Relations and Media Literacy Training

Child abuse physicians have always talked to the lay public. Testimony to judges and juries is a regular part of CAP practice, and physicians have been called upon to talk to the press about high profile cases and prevention agendas. Arguably this job has gotten both harder, and more important in the last ten years. A number of physicians have shown up regularly in court to put

forth opposing and often novel theories for individual children's injuries. Some of these same physicians have been creating a body of medical literature challenging the foundation of child abuse diagnosis, much of it novel hypothetical and poorly. Armed with this literature, these physicians have developed alliances within the legal community and lay press to bring these arguments to legal journals and lay media. The Tuerkheimer law review article and the PBS/Pro Publica television segment are two well known examples. Recent media representations of child abuse issues have been hot topics on the Helfer list-serve, and instill passion and calls to action, as well as anger and sometimes disgust among members. The importance of educating our members on interacting with the media ripples into every part of our profession: for our profession's standing in the public eye; for our advocacy with government legislature and funding agencies; for education of the public and other key stakeholders; and for the protection of children in general.

Thus, the Ray Helfer Society Conference Committee and the Ray Helfer Society Public Relations Committee are collaborating to conduct training activities at the 2013 Ray Helfer Society Meeting to improve members' ability to deal with the media and communicate with the public about concepts and cases of child abuse. Experienced physicians and one or two non-physicians from the fields of media and/or public relations will conduct a three hour interactive workshop on Sunday afternoon, built on a successful program previously given at the 2012 Pediatric Academic Societies Meeting. A symposium will be presented to the plenary session on Monday morning.

Please note that the entire membership will benefit from the symposium that is to be held on media relations at our April meeting in Sonoma, CA. Thanks to all three committees for advancing the work of our organization.