

Department Anesthesia and Pain Medicine
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International Inter-Institutional collaborative learning for Pain Medicine Fellows in the United States and Canada *Moving Beyond the COVID Pandemic: Opportunities for learning and collaboration in chronic pain medicine fellowships*

With the arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic in the United States, a rapid transition in the provision of healthcare occurred. For trainees in short, procedure intensive fellowships, such as Pain Medicine, the changes resulted in significant impacts on traditional training models. In order to support continued educational growth, it became clear that there was a need for a novel didactic curriculum that would be easily accessible from home and which would provide opportunity for communication, collaboration and engagement.

The University of Washington and Brigham and Women's Hospitals' Pain Medicine Fellowship programs initiated a collaborative learning process via a daily, Zoom based didactic designed to provide both formal learning and institutional collaboration. Over the course of two months, a number of other programs nationwide joined as word of the benefits of the program became known.

The program meets for one hour per day Monday through Friday. Three days per week are reserved for faculty lectures while two days are reserved for fellow-led presentations of difficult cases and journal club. A shared document through Google Drive enables faculty and fellows to sign-up to give presentations on their area of expertise.

During the first month of the program we obtained feedback via participant surveys and direct conversation. All participants found the program valuable for both their education and collaboration opportunities. By allowing faculty to teach about their chosen areas of expertise as opposed to designated curriculum, participants felt that lectures were more engaging and contemporary allowing them to partake in discussions with national experts on current trends in the field. Having dedicated time for presentations intended to spark discussion (case studies and journal clubs) also increased opportunity for engagement with fellows and faculty of differing institutions both through the discussions themselves but also through faculty mentorship of fellows on their presentations. While there have been some logistical challenges such as differing time zones and scheduling errors, these have been easily remedied with clear communication. The primary challenge we encountered was that, though the web-based platform makes such a collaboration possible, it has also impeded discussion, especially as the group expanded. We attempted to mitigate this by encouraging individuals to keep their videos on in order to provide visual feedback for presenters, dedicating time both to defining expectations to ensure a shared agenda and to introductions among the members of the group, reviewing the interactive features possible through the platform, defining a specific moderator, and encouraging presenters to actively engage the audience. We also hope to use the small group "break-out" function to support questions and conversation that can then be brought to the larger group in real-time.

Participants have expressed a desire to continue the collaboration after the pandemic which we are currently working to determine how best to do. Engaging and collaborating with diverse programs on a regular schedule has provided a depth and breadth of educational opportunities not previously available. We plan to continue to employ strategies to develop this model of learning for future trainees.