As PM&R is a small medical specialty, students tend to gain exposure to this field later in their training, if at all, and often after they have already chosen a different field to pursue. Student interest groups (SIG) are vital to providing students with early exposure to PM&R. Some of these students will pursue residency training in our field, but it is also important to educate all students, regardless of their desired specialty. We want physicians in other fields to better understand the role of PM&R in the medical community.

This newsletter was created with the help of generous submissions from medical students and residents across the country. The purposes include: to introduce students to PM&R, to allow sharing of ideas for enhancing existing SIGs (such as workshops, lectures and volunteer activities), to inspire students to start a SIG at their own medical institution, and to encourage PM&R departments to reach out to their affiliated medial schools and SIGs. We want to attract the best and brightest medical students to pursue training in PM&R and thus exposure in the early stages of medical school education is crucial.

If you are interested in starting a PM&R SIG, please refer to the AAP’s, Medical Student Interest Group Guidebook, at http://www.physiatry.org/education/pdfs/Medical_Student_Interest_Group_Guidebook.pdf. If you are a medical student interested in learning more about PM&R, please refer to the AAP’s website, at http://www.physiatry.org/Field_Section.cfm. Please refer to the “For Residents” section of the AAP website to communicate with the leadership of the AAP’s Resident/Fellows Council regarding this newsletter and future newsletters.

**UMDNJ-New Jersey Medical School**

*By Samuel Chu, MD, New Jersey Medical School Class of 2011, President, NJMS PM&R Student Interest Group 2010-2011*

It is almost impossible for a student at New Jersey Medical School (NJMS) to go through four years of training without gaining a significant understanding of and exposure to Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation. The strength and reputation of the NJMS/Kessler Residency Program coupled with the active involvement of the PM&R Interest Group throughout the past decade has helped to integrate physiatry into the academic and extracurricular fabric at NJMS. Physiatrists are involved in medical education from the start, serving as lecturers in the first year physical exam course, mentors in student career advising groups and instructors in the fourth year mandatory clerkship. The PM&R Interest Group is also involved from the very beginning of the first year at the annual student activities fair where students can sign up to participate in a multitude of educational events, activities and electives held throughout the year. Needless to say, PM&R has a significant presence in medical student life in Newark, New Jersey.

In the 2010-2011 academic year, the PM&R Interest Group at NJMS was led by an 8-person executive board and had over 120 members on its active roster. The executive board consists of students from all years, and in addition to the traditional positions of president, vice president, treasurer and secretary, it also has lecture, shadowing and community service coordinator positions. The board was transitioned in April of the previous year, leaving the summer months to prepare for the year ahead. Using a three-pronged approach consisting of coordinating educational events, clinical

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opportunities and service activities, the interest group set out to provide students at NJMS with a broad array of experiences within the field of PM&R.

At the August student activities fair for new first year students, the PM&R Interest Group had a strong presence, with flyers, a presentation board outlining planned activities and custom reflex hammers donned with the NJMS PM&R logo for students who could correctly answer medical trivia questions. We held our first official meeting a few weeks later with our faculty advisor and several residents who helped to describe the field, discuss their own experiences and answer questions from students. Later in the fall, we also helped to organize a workshop in the cadaver lab to learn more about clinical anatomy under the guidance of residents. In the spring, we invited attending physiatrists to present lectures on topics such as “Sports & Spinal Cord Injury” and “Fascia: Extendable Not Expendable.” A residency panel was held in March with the seven graduating fourth year students who had recently matched into PM&R to further discuss the application process and answer any related questions.

In the fall, we were fortunate to work with a group of PM&R sports medicine attending physicians who cover local high school football games. We established a sideline shadowing program where students from all four years could sign up to work the games with the covering attending and usually a resident. In these games, students learned how to evaluate concussions and other sports-related injuries. The program was extremely popular, and we had students present at every game. In addition, with the guidance and assistance of our faculty advisor, we set up a clinical shadowing program that paired interested students with physiatrists at our institution.

The interest group has maintained strong ties with surrounding facilities over the years, including a local children’s rehabilitation hospital. Our students have volunteered with the hospital’s haunted house and prom, swim meets, track and field meets, the Tri-State Wheelchair Games, and many other exciting events, often times working in collaboration with the NJMS Pediatric Interest Group (Project Peds). Students have found these events to be particularly rewarding, educational and fun.

This year, we established an online group page where we uploaded PM&R articles, presentations and other relevant documents that could serve as general resources for students participating in electives, shadowing or sideline coverage. The group also helped to promote events within the residency program such as journal clubs and the annual research symposium that our students were invited to attend. For 2011-2012, an additional position was added to the executive board, a Member-at-Large, to accommodate the overwhelming interest by students to take a leadership role in this growing organization. Some of the plans for the new year include purchasing books that students can borrow when on a PM&R rotation, expanding the current lecture series and establishing additional volunteer and shadowing opportunities with local organizations and physicians.

The NJMS PM&R Interest Group continues to have a remarkable level of student involvement and interest. However, the activities of the group would not be possible without the strong support and involvement of attending physicians and residents in the Department of PM&R at NJMS, the foundation and relationships established by group leaders in years past and the financial support of the student council. We are excited to see what the new year has to offer!

Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine-Virginia Campus

By Romer Orada, President, PM&R Student Interest Group 2010-2011

Now in its second year, the Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (PM&R) interest group at the Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine-Virginia Campus continues to grow and attract bright students. PM&R, a relatively unknown specialty to most medical students, is an up and coming student interest group at VCOM. The Osteopathic Manipulative Techniques (OMT) taught by osteopathic medical schools provides students ample exposure to musculoskeletal medicine early in their training. Because of this, students gain an appreciation of the human body’s dynamic structure and function.

In December 2010, the group went to an Orthopedic Clinic in Blacksburg, Virginia, to learn about PM&R from a local physiatrist. In addition to learning about the opportunities available in the field of PM&R, the student group learned how Musculoskeletal Ultrasound is used in the practice to diagnose and treat various musculoskeletal complaints.

In March 2011, the group invited a fourth year medical student to speak about the process of applying to PM&R residencies. The talk included his interests in neuromusculoskeletal medicine, PM&R rotations during his 4th year, and the process and timeline of applying to residency. His talk was very informative and provided excellent advice on how to succeed in getting into a PM&R residency.

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PM&R is one of the best specialties to get into as an osteopathic physician because it incorporates musculoskeletal medicine with the global view of the human body. The mission of the group is to inform the students at VCOM about the field and in the past year, it did just that. The leadership of PM&R has already been established for the next year. The new leaders’ enthusiasm and knowledge about the field means only one thing…the future is bright for VCOM PM&R!

New York College of Osteopathic Medicine
By Derek Ho, President, NYCOM PM&R Student Interest Group

At our PM&R Interest Group at the New York College of Osteopathic Medicine, our mission is to introduce students to the field of PM&R. We realize that many students enter medical school with little knowledge of what Physiatrists do. By providing exposure to many aspects of PM&R, we hope to familiarize students with this growing and increasingly dynamic field of medicine.

We are a formal student chapter of the American Osteopathic College of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation. This year, many inspiring lecturers from across the tri-state area gave presentations to the student body at NYCOM. We planned our schedule with the goal of creating great interest especially amongst our first year students; and towards that goal, our membership recruitment has tripled compared to the previous year. Our first meeting was an introductory lecture by Lyn Weiss, MD, Chair of the Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Department at Nassau University Medical Center. Her enthusiasm and passion was a key to our brilliant start of the year. For the subsequent meetings, the aim of our e-board was to tailor speakers’ topics to what first year students were learning in lecture, so as to appeal to as broad a range of students as possible. Our second speaker of the year, Robert Gotlin, DO, gave a thought-provoking presentation on “Validation of the Shoulder Exam”, and as past president of the AOCPMR, urged us to get involved as much as we can. His presentation coincided perfectly with our first year students’ lectures & physical exam workshops. Finally, our third speaker of the year was Luke Garcia, DO, a PGY-4 resident from NUMC who talked about PM&R residency. We are also starting to hold monthly journal club meetings with articles assigned to us from the AOCPMR, and are finalizing details on two workshops in EMG and Ultrasound in conjunction with Nassau University Medical Center to give students a more hands-on experience.

Touro College of Osteopathic Medicine-Harlem Campus
By Kelly Valignota, President, Touro College of Osteopathic Medicine-Harlem Campus PM&R Student Interest Group

"Rehabilitation is to be a master word in medicine.” These words were quite a bold statement when they were made by Dr. William Mayo, MD, in 1925. However, in modern-day medicine, rehabilitation has indeed come to the forefront.

As the Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Interest Group at Touro College of Osteopathic Medicine, our main objective
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Harlem Campus

is to create an awareness of this wonderful and growing specialty among our students. This is the inaugural year for the group, and thus far, it has been quite eventful. We kicked off the year as medical volunteers with the New York Special Olympics. During these events, students assisted PM&R residents from various programs throughout Manhattan in addressing athletic injuries, ranging from cuts and scrapes to ankle sprains to minor blunt force traumas. These events were inspiring and rewarding, and they evolved further with the addition of Physical Examination clinics that were geared toward that particular sport (e.g. the shoulder at the Aquatic Meet and the ankle at the Basketball Meet). These workshops were an excellent forum for students to refine physical examination skills as well as an invaluable opportunity to garner some personal insight from residents about their experience in the specialty. We have cultivated great relationships with several of these residents who continue to serve as mentors and have also come to speak at an “Introduction to PM&R” lecture at TouroCOM.

Other goals of the interest group include exposing students to subspecialties within PM&R and highlighting the roles of continuing education and research in the field. We have found the monthly lecture series hosted by the New York Society of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (NYSPMR) to be a fantastic venue for supplementing the education we receive in our pre-clinical years. We have been introduced to topics that students may have only a limited exposure to, such as “The Evolving Understanding of Mild Traumatic Brain Injury” (lecturer: Dr. Brian Greenwald, MD) and “Amputee Rehabilitation” (lecturer: Dr. Jeffrey Heckman, DO). This lecture series is a platform for students to gain a wider understanding of special topics within the field in addition to providing the opportunity to network with practicing physiatrists.

To encourage students to stay up-to-date with the research and literature within PM&R, we hold a monthly journal club meeting under the guidance of the Journal Club of the American Osteopathic College of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (AOCPMR). During these meetings, we have discussed various topics including “Adult Traumatic Brachial Plexus Injuries” and “The Minimally Conscious State.” The journal club facilitates the practice of presenting scientific papers in addition to providing the opportunity to converse about topics that we will address throughout our clinical careers. Furthermore, we provided information to the community on “Winter Safety and Fall Prevention” at the Harlem Health Fair this November. In the near future, we will be hosting an “Amputee Awareness” week that will include a viewing of Murderball (a documentary about Wheelchair Rugby) and a lecture on Amputee Rehabilitation. With all of these events and activities, we hope to develop the knowledge and insight that will enable us to someday be active and productive members of the field.

Georgetown University School of Medicine: The Birth of a Student Interest Group

By Ibrahim Usman-Oyowe, President and Founder, Georgetown University School of Medicine PM&R Student Interest Group

If one were to poll the Georgetown University School of Medicine student body, chances are that very few would have heard about PM&R or what it stands for: Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation. Two 3rd year students interested in the field decided that we were going to change this. Dr. Lanoff, an AAPM&R board member and practicing physiatrist from Vernon Hills, Illinois, was in Washington DC and gave a talk at George Washington University. He was kind enough to have an impromptu stop at Georgetown and presented an enlightening and inspiring talk on Physiatry. This was the perfect opportunity for us to learn about the field and we were eager to share this with the school. From this the PM&R interest group was unofficially started as we hosted our first event “What is a physiatrist?” With a great turnout at the event it was obvious that Georgetown needed its own PM&R interest group to educate its students about the field and bolster interest in this exciting and rapidly expanding specialty that focuses on the function of all patients. A few months after the initial event we met with the executive student council at our school with the proposal to officially create the group. On Sept 6, 2011 the group was approved and is now at Georgetown School of Medicine to stay. Some of the programs we have planned for the near future include the physiatrist physical exam, sessions on a applying to a PM&R residency, and some volunteer activities working with the disabled in our city. With the rising interest in our community I am very optimistic that more and more people will get to know about the field and pursue residency training in PM&R. I am very proud to be part of starting the PM&R interest group at Georgetown and hope there is sustained growth of our club in the coming years.