

2011 Western Regional Emergency Medicine Student Symposium: Students Working for Students

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September 10 marked the 2011 Western Regional Emergency Medicine Student Symposium (WREMSS), an annual event presented by the students of University of Southern California (USC) Keck School of Medicine and University of California Irvine (UCI) School of Medicine. This year, USC hosted the symposium, which drew over 100 students and dozens of faculty and residents. First through fourth-year students from USC, UCI, UCLA, Western, and Loma Linda, as well as visiting students from the University of Vermont, Hawaii, Drexel, Baylor, St. Louis University and others, enjoyed the lectures, research forum, residency fair and hands-on workshops.

The afternoon began with lectures from Southern California faculty with topics that ranged from how to choose the right residency and how to build a CV for emergency medicine (EM) to international EM and how the complete eye exam can be performed in the emergency department (ED). From there, students went to workshops, such as hands-on ultrasound instruction for the eFAST scan, pediatric intraosseous lines, eye emergencies, crash deliveries, rapid sequence intubation and a disaster drill with a post earthquake scenario. Students of all years attended a residency fair with faculty representatives from programs all over California.

The WREMSS is special in that it is a student-designed, student-run event. Inspired by American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) and other large scale professional conferences, we seek to introduce and expand the academic and clinical aspects Emergency Medicine available our peers. There is a great benefit to adding student symposiums to the list of available conferences for students to attend. Student-run symposiums are tremendous opportunities to reach medical students on a more personal level and provide a conduit to the world of EM for many who would not travel to a national EM conference, which tend to draw mainly the students who have decided on emergency medicine as a career.

Our local symposium is a forum to catch a broader group of students early. It draws not only the students who are committed to EM but also those who are considering or even those who are just curious. First-year medical students barely into their education are encouraged to attend and learn from peers and friends in a setting where they feel comfortable. In that way, the symposium creates a stepping stone and encourages a pattern of attendance at other conferences and symposiums. Our challenge is to create an event that fourth-year students who have already submitted residency applications will be eager to attend, as well as marketing the symposium to fresh faces who have not decided what specialty they will choose.

It is duty of the symposium and its organizers to be as professional, educational and exciting as possible. It must not only be in the style of other conferences and symposiums but also offer comparable content. After all, we are creating an event that is not only introducing emergency medicine but instills a desire to pursue similar opportunities. To that end, WREMSS has been repeatedly successful in becoming a professional symposium with learning opportunities for first through fourth years and drawing a variety of amazing faculty speakers and workshop leaders. I want to thank all the students and faculty involved; I am so excited that we could provide education, advice and workshops to our colleagues going into EM and grateful to introduce the world of EM to so many more eager students. Congratulations to USC for yet another symposium to be proud of and I look forward next year's WREMSS on September 22, 2012 at UC Irvine.

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