

Piloting the Spine Quality Outcomes Database: An Interview with Michael Hatzakis, Jr., MD

The Spine Quality Outcomes Database (SQOD) is a clinical data registry created by AAPM&R and the American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS). The SQOD follows individuals with spine-related issues longitudinally and, collectively, the data has the ability to advance the understanding of the ever-growing spine patient population while demonstrating the quality and value of treatments. Michael Hatzakis, Jr., MD, currently serves on the AAPM&R/AANS Joint Registry Steering Committee for the SQOD, and we had an opportunity to connect with him.



Spine Quality Outcomes Database

Working Together to Improve Patient Care



Dr. Hatzakis is board certified in physical medicine and rehabilitation. In 2005, he started in solo private practice and gradually built a multidisciplinary rehabilitation program, Rehabilitation Options of Issaquah (ROI). ROI is centered around a business model of bringing multidisciplinary skills and talents together to provide continuous and comprehensive care to individuals with musculoskeletal needs in an outpatient rehabilitation setting.

How has your experience been so far working with the Academy to integrate with the Spine Quality Outcomes Database?

Dr. Hatzakis: Working with the SQOD and both of the physiatry and neurosurgery teams has been an extremely rewarding experience. Like many physicians later in their careers, I feel the need to touch more lives than just those I see in my clinic. My clinical practice continues to be rewarding, however, this project allows me the opportunity to potentially touch many more lives. Over the course of nearly 20 years in clinical and academic practice, I have observed many ways that physiatrists improve the lives of their patients. Having the opportunity to compare my observations with other experts in the field is validating and exciting.

It also allows each of us to put our knowledge and experience into an infrastructure so as to hopefully guide others toward what we feel is the most effective approach to spine care, and ultimately measure which patterns of intervention are most effective. I am proud to report that my clinic was the first to sign up for the registry, and so far it has been a smooth experience working with a highly-skilled, third-party vendor and an impressive team at the Academy. It is motivating to work with others who are as passionate as I am about making an impact on our field, and this sense of teamwork toward a common goal drives us to move behind our differences.

What ultimately "sold" you/your practice on participating in the registry?

Dr. Hatzakis: Many physicians share the frustration that in a randomized, controlled clinical trial, it is very challenging to measure the patterns of care that lead to a good, patient-centered outcome due to the constraints needed to isolate one intervention at a time for statistical significance. As any good physiatrist knows, excellent physiatric care is not about the single intervention, it is the team and the entire context of care that matters. A growing frustration many of us share is observing a medical system, and particularly a reimbursement system, that has not yet been able to incentivize quality care. It is disturbing to observe the multiple financial incentives that often run counter to the best interest of the patient.

What value do you think the registry will bring to the specialty of PM&R?

Dr. Hatzakis: The registry is our best opportunity to truly measure and disseminate the larger patterns of care that represent outcomes that matter most to patients, and furthermore, to those paying the bills for that care. The SQOD is an attempt to capture patterns of care and incentivize providers to practice in this way. With this data, we can then lobby for new incentive systems that are more closely aligned to the outcomes that matter to patients. When I look back on my career in physiatry, this is a legacy that would make me proud to not just be a physiatrist, but to be part of our Academy. I believe this project will "put us on the map" of medical specialties as one that truly cares and advocates for patients. Spine is just the beginning; once we develop an infrastructure, it can easily be applied to other areas, such as post-acute care, stroke, spinal cord injury, multiple sclerosis or pediatrics. Physiatrists can also use the SQOD to meet their American Board of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (ABPMR) Part IV Maintenance of Certification® requirement, as well as meet their Merit-Based Incentive Payment System (MIPS) reporting requirements. ❖

Visit www.aapmr.org/SQOD to learn more and register to participate.

Gerold Ebenbichler, MD Awarded 2016 President's Citation Award

The President's Citation Award has been announced for the highest-rated research abstract submitted for the AAPM&R 2016 Annual Assembly.

WINNING ABSTRACT

Long-Term Outcome of Ultrasound Therapy for Calcific Tendinitis of the Shoulder: Results of a RCT

LEAD AUTHOR

Gerold Ebenbichler, MD, Vienna Medical University; Vienna, Austria

SUPPORTING AUTHORS

Martin Funovics, MD; Franz Kainberger, PhD; Karin Pieber, MD; Karl Ludwig Resch, MD, PhD

The Academy presents the annual President's Citation Award to recognize outstanding research in the field of PM&R.

All abstracts and papers submitted to AAPM&R's Annual Assembly are eligible to win. As the lead author of the 2016 winning abstract, Dr. Ebenbichler receives complimentary registration to AAPM&R's 2017 Annual Assembly in Denver, October 12–15. Turn to page 12 to learn more about the 2017 Annual Assembly!

Finalists were chosen based on the highest scores received during the abstract review process prior to the Assembly. Final scoring by members of the AAPM&R Evidence Committee was completed after the finalists' presentations. ❖