

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES TO IMPLEMENT A PRIMARY CARE RESEARCH FRAMEWORK



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INTRODUCTION

Historically, primary care has struggled to simultaneously embrace and succeed in the three core areas of academia: medical care, education, and research. Of these three cores areas, research has been the greatest obstacle of most primary care departments, especially in Family Medicine. In 2004, the Future of Family Medicine report published recommendations that would shape the specialty of Family Medicine to better serve the people in the United States. As a specialty, family medicine must garner the respect and establish its own niche in the research arena. Many departments of family medicine have struggled with competing demands related to funding, clinical productivity demands, and the lack of primary care researchers. Most family medicine departments have been limited by the lack of an infrastructure that cultivates a research environment. Our purpose is to present an infrastructure at the university of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth, Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine, Department of Family Medicine that has been successful in developing a productive research environment through education and active research.

HISTORICAL

In 1997, the Division of Education and Research (DEAR) was created to foster an environment of scholarly activities. The DEAR not only spearheaded research grants and projects, but also provided assistance in grant writing, protocol development, and Institutional Review Board applications for faculty, staff, and students. From meager beginnings, the DEAR now occupies a wing of the Family Medicine corridor with its own research conference room containing state-of-the-art computer hardware, web-conferencing capabilities, and a medical research library. Over the last 4 years, the DEAR received Health Resources and Services Administration grant funding to establish a post-doctoral and a pre-doctoral primary care clinical research fellowship. Today, the pre-doctoral primary care clinical research fellowship is leading by example with fellows presenting at national conferences and publishing in peer-reviewed medical journals.

DIVISION OF EDUCATION AND RESEARCH OUTCOMES (1997 TO PRESENT)

Publications:

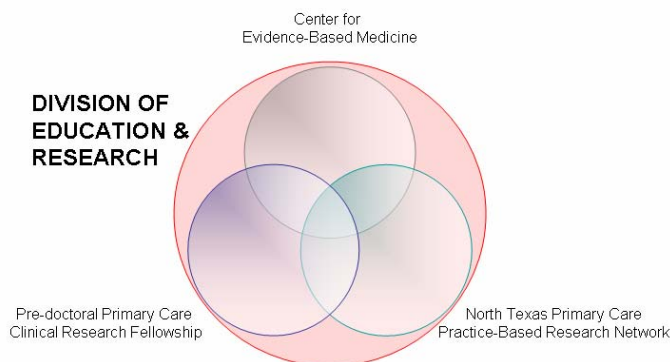
Peer-reviewed 69

Non-peer reviewed: 44

Presentations: 231

Grants (total funding received): \$2,527,405

Research Framework



DIVISION OF EDUCATION AND RESEARCH PRODUCTIVITY REPORTS

The DEAR publishes the quarterly *Primary Care Research Journal* to showcase the activities of faculty, residents, students, and fellows. In addition, the DEAR website functions as a portal to information for all visitors. Visit us at: (<http://www.hsc.unt.edu/departments/familymed/DEAR/index.htm>)

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

Over the years, the DEAR had 3 critical realizations in order to sustain and succeed its research endeavors. Each realization was accompanied with a development of an entity to meet that realization. **They include:**

1. Educate current physicians about research methods and the use of evidence to practice effective health care

Outcome: We created the **Center for Evidence-Based Medicine** which conducts research and a faculty development lecture series on the Principles and Practice of Evidence-Based Medicine (EBM). The Center is also active in teaching students, residents, and research fellows on the practice of EBM with the goal to deliver optimal health care to patients. The Center is currently coordinating a series of articles for an osteopathic journal.

2. Train future clinical researchers in order to advance and preserve primary care research

Outcome: We established the **Pre-doctoral Primary Care Clinical Research Fellowship** in which dual degree students complete their D.O. degree and a Master of Science in Clinical research in 4 years. Fellows conduct active research by designing research projects, implementing it, collecting and analyzing data, and writing manuscripts for publication.

3. Create a primary care research "laboratory" to conduct primary care research

Outcome: The **North Texas Primary Care Practice-Based Research Network (NorTex)** was created in 2005. It is a collaborative network of 54 clinics with the objective to conduct primary care research that will advance the field of primary care and address the health needs of the communities it conducts research in. NorTex has received NIH funding to conduct research in cardiovascular disease. Other active research activities include HIV/AIDS, patient-physician communication, preventive services, and infant mortality.