IPROS Network – The Creation of Research Atmosphere in Primary Care

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Trends in Pediatric Practice

- The majority of pediatric patients is treated in a community setting.
- The wide spectrum of clinical severity seen in the office differs from that seen in hospitals.
- Psychosocial morbidity ("The New Morbidity") is frequently encountered in the primary care setting.
Primary Care Research

Advantages

- The sample represents the true character of the disease
- Enables research of psychosocial issues
- Allows health care services research
- Helps to improve quality of care
Primary Care Research - Difficulties

- Lack of time
- Shortage of funding
- Little help in designing a study
- Difficulty in getting ethic approval
- Little or no help in doing the study
Primary Care Research
Difficulties - cont.

- No help in writing down the manuscript for publication
- Loneliness of the solo practitioner
- Emotional involvement with patient care
A number of primary care clinics grouped together in the structure of a network for the purpose of performing research in the community

The network is the “Research Laboratory” of the primary care setting
Research Networks - Examples

- PROS - Pediatric Research in Office Setting (US)
- Italy, France, UK, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Australia
Research Networks - Israel

- RAMBAM - family medicine
  - incorporates 150 family practice clinics
  - established 1990

- IPROS – pediatrics
  - incorporates 300 pediatric clinics
  - established 1996
IPROS

- Israel Pediatric Research in Office Setting network
- Affiliated with IAPA, Israel Ambulatory Pediatric Association
- IPROS mission – to facilitate research activity in the primary pediatric care
Key Elements in a Network

- Participating pediatricians
- Research projects
- Intra-net communication
- Others
Participating Pediatricians

- Highly motivated
- Represent different setups of primary care
- Come from different geographic regions and HMO’s
- Treat patients with different socioeconomic backgrounds
Incentives for Research

- Self satisfaction
- Academic degree
- Payment
Research Projects

- Should interest the primary pediatrician
- Related to the daily practice
- Simple and easy
- Of short duration
- Requiring reasonable budget
- Ethically uncomplicated
- Fit the framework of a multicenter study
Projects by Designs

- Clinical drug trials
- Self designed clinical studies
- Attitudes surveys
- Database analysis
- Disease monitoring
Clinical drug trials

- Attenuated flu vaccine
  - PIDJ 2006
  - NEJM 2007
Clinical drug trials

- Highly profitable
- Intermediate level of interest
- Requires meticulous work
- Time consuming
- Patient recruitment – critical
- Ethic Approval – through HMOs.
- Success rate - high
Self designed clinical studies

Self designed clinical studies

- Very interesting
- Funding – difficult
- Requires highly experienced PIs.
- Self organized logistics – critical
- Ethic approval – often complicated
- Success rate - low
Attitude surveys

- Pharyngitis treatment – IMAJ 2000
- Acetaminophen prescriptions – J Clin Pharm Ther 2005
- Exclusion from day care – Patient Educ Counsel 2006.
Attitude surveys

- Easy studies
- Level of interest – intermediate
- Minimal budget
- Ethic approval – easy
- Success rate - high
Database analysis

- Anemia incidence – Pediatrics 2006
Database Analysis

- Easy studies
- Minimal budget
- Level of interest – intermediate:
  - Clinical purpose?
  - Administrative purpose?
- Success rate – high
Disease monitoring

- Cross country influenza activity
- Web interface
Influenza monitoring

- Weekly reports from >60 clinics
- Reports based on number of patients seen with influenza like illness during the peak season
- Embedding the data in GIS – Graphic Information System
Intra-net Communication

- Meetings
- Telephone
- Fax
- Letters
- E-mail
- IPRONET mailing list
Meetings

- Annual meeting
- Update on ongoing projects
- Introduction of new proposals
- Lectures and workshops
- Group discussions
IPRONET mailing list

- A once “research only” list (brainstorming, recruitment)
- Now a general pediatric web community with research orientation
- Not a moderated list
Funding

- Research grants
  - Israel Ambulatory Pediatric Association
  - Israel Pediatric Association
  - Health research institutes
- Pharmaceutical companies
  - International CROs
  - Local companies
Other Factors

- Recruiting pediatricians
- Promotion of all levels of participation
- Network Spirit
Ethical dilemmas 1

- Patient recruitment issues:
  - Potential invasiveness (blood tests)
  - Informed consent understanding

- Primary clinic related:
  - Research takes priority over patient needs
  - Pressure by study patients on clinic staff
Ethical dilemmas 2

- Sponsor companies:
  - Limitations on the freedom of publication
  - Using research data for inaccurate advertising
Future directions

- Promoting high success rate initiatives:
  - Database analysis
  - Attitudes surveys (obesity?)
- Cooperation with CRO representatives
- Development of web based applications
- Moving from facilitation to initiation:
  - Launching IAPA initiated and funded studies
Thank you!