

Award Recipients

Excellence in Practice Award Recipients

Excellence in Quality of Care

Brent C. James, MD, M.Stat, is Vice President for Medical Research for Intermountain Health Care, a nonprofit healthcare organization that serves the health needs of Utah and Idaho residents and is also Executive Director of its Institute for Health Care Delivery Research. He is an Adjunct Professor in the University of Utah School of Medicine, Department of Family and Preventive Medicine and also holds a Visiting Lectureship in the Department of Health Policy and Management at the Harvard School of Public Health. He received his medical degree from the University of Utah, School of Medicine, a masters degree in statistics and undergraduate degrees in computer science and medical biology from the University of Utah. Prior to his current position, Dr. James was Assistant Professor of Biomedical Computing in the Department of Biostatistics, Harvard School of Public Health and a biostatistician at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. Prior to that, he served as the Cancer Department Assistant Director and Consultant on Computers for the American College of Surgeons. Dr. James is a member of the American Statistical Association, the American Association for Medical Systems and Informatics, and the American College of Physician Executives.

Dr. James is nationally recognized as a leader in applying quality management principles to reduce costs by improving health care delivery. He has been instrumental in showing that quality improvement is a natural extension of clinical research and medicine's long-standing commitment to patient care. His Advanced Training Program in Clinical Practice Improvement, a series of courses teaching proven principles for high quality care, has drawn thousands of senior health leaders from around the world. He has published numerous scientific articles, book chapters and monographs with a focus on quality theory and clinical research, and serves on a number of national task forces and committees that examine health care quality and cost control. He most recently was honored by being elected as a member of the prestigious Washington D.C.-based Institute of Medicine (IOM).

Patient Safety

James Bagian, MD, P.E., is the director of the National Center for Patient Safety (NCPS) for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Located in Ann Arbor, Michigan, the NCPS embodies the VA's uncompromising commitment to reducing and preventing adverse medical events while enhancing the care given to its patients. The NCPS represents a unified and cohesive patient safety program, with active participation by all of the VA hospitals supported by dedicated patient safety managers. The program focuses on prevention not punishment, applying human factor analysis and the safety research of high reliability organizations (aviation and nuclear power), targeted at identifying and eliminating system vulnerabilities.

Prior to joining NCPS, Bagian was the deputy director of the Regional and State Programs Division at the Environmental Protection Agency. Before that he was an astronaut/mission specialist for NASA and flew on space shuttles Discovery and Columbia where he formulated medical scientific investigations conducted aboard the shuttle as well as performing other duties such as deploying satellites. He also served as an investigator on the space shuttle Challenger accident and the Columbia accident where he headed the medical investigation into the accident. In addition, he was the diver who identified the Challenger crew module debris on the ocean floor.

Dr. Bagian received his medical degree from Thomas Jefferson University, Philadelphia, Pa., and is a Clinical Assistant Professor of Preventive Medicine and Community Health at The University of Texas Medical Branch, Galveston, Texas. He also serves as an adjunct professor of Military and Emergency Medicine at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, F. Edward Hebert School of Medicine, Bethesda, Maryland. He was elected a member of the National Academy of Engineering in 2000 and the Institute of Medicine in 2003.

Award Recipients

Improved Quality Processes

James O. Westgard, PhD is a Professor in the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine at the University of Wisconsin Medical School and Director of Quality Management Services for the Clinical Laboratories at the University of Wisconsin Hospital and Clinics. He was an early implementer of TQM in healthcare laboratories and is co-author of a book on Quality Re-engineering in the Clinical Laboratory. He teaches in the Clinical Laboratory Science Program and is co-director of an Internet educational program that offers a Graduate Certificate in Laboratory Quality Management. A native of North Dakota, he obtained a BA degree in chemistry from Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota, and Master's and Ph.D. degrees in analytical chemistry from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He began his career at UW as a Clinical Chemist and served in the past as Director of Clinical Chemistry. Dr. Westgard's early interest was in the development of method evaluation protocols and he served as the first chairman of the Evaluation Protocols Area Committee in CLSI. He has served on several other CLSI quality committees and currently chairs the working group that is revising document C24-A2 (Internal Quality Control Testing: Principles and Definitions). His interest in quality control began when he was on sabbatical leave at Uppsala University in Sweden. This work led to the development of a multi-rule quality control procedure, often referred to as "Westgard Rules." His extensive work on quality control is summarized in the book *Cost-Effective Quality Control: Managing the Quality and Productivity of Analytical Processes*.

His most recent work has focused on quality planning and the development of quantitative models that relate the analytical, biologic, or clinical quality requirement for a test to the precision and accuracy of a measurement procedure and the error-detection characteristics of a QC procedure. The development of this theory and approach for quality-planning led to the formation of Westgard QC to support the tools, technology, and training to make quality-planning practical in healthcare laboratories. Through Westgard QC, he provides a popular website with resources for analytical quality management and has published 6 books on laboratory quality management. These include a "basics" series on Method Validation, Quality Control Practices, and Planning for Quality, specific guidance for implementing the CLIA Final Rules for Quality Systems, a critical assessment of current laboratory quality management practices in the book *Nothing but the Truth about Quality*, and an advanced book on Six Sigma Quality Design and Control. He has also developed computer programs to support the selection and implementation of optimized QC procedures for laboratory testing.

Improved Quality Processes

Peter J. Howanitz, MD is Director of Clinical Laboratories, Professor and Vice Chair in the Dept. of Pathology at State University of New York, Downstate Medical Center in Brooklyn. Dr. Howanitz graduated from Upstate Medical Center in Syracuse then trained at Mt. Sinai Hospital in New York City and Upstate Medical Center in Syracuse before joining the faculty at Upstate as Co-Director of Chemistry in the Department of Pathology. After almost 6 years in this position, he moved to UCLA where he became Director of Laboratories, Head of Clinical Pathology, and Professor of Pathology. In 1998 following 15 years at UCLA he moved to Downstate Medical Center in Brooklyn.

Dr. Howanitz has been active in many professional societies, having chaired committees for the College of American Pathologists, American Society for Clinical Pathology, American Association for Clinical Chemistry, and CDC. Dr. Howanitz has more than 300 publications, including a large number of publications on the quality of laboratory testing. He was instrumental in developing the College of American Pathologists' Q-Probes and Q-Tracks programs in which more than 4000 hospital laboratories world wide have participated. He co-edited books on Quality Assurance, and a Textbook of Laboratory Medicine, and currently is Associate Editor of the Archives of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine.

Award Recipients

Improved Clinical Integration

Michael Laposata, MD, PhD.- What distinguishes Dr. Laposata in the clinical laboratory profession is his commitment and enthusiasm to help referring clinicians get the best healthcare outcomes from the laboratory tests ordered on behalf of their patients. The impact of his work and contributions is measured by the stories of patients whose lives were changed for the better because of the testing support and clinical interaction Dr. Laposata and his lab team provide to referring clinicians.

Dr. Laposata is the Director of Clinical Laboratories and a physician in the Department of Medicine at the Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) in Boston. He is a Professor of Pathology at Harvard Medical School. He received his M.D. and Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and completed a postdoctoral research fellowship and residency in Laboratory Medicine at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis.

Dr. Laposata championed a system at MGH whereby the clinical laboratory data in coagulation, toxicology and other areas are systematically interpreted with the generation of a patient specific narrative paragraph by a physician with expertise in the area. This service is essentially identical to the service provided by physicians in radiology and anatomic pathology, except that it involves clinical laboratory test results.

Dr. Laposata is the recipient of 12 major teaching prizes at Harvard, the Massachusetts General Hospital, and the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine. His recognitions include the 1989 Lindback award, a teaching prize with competition across the entire University of Pennsylvania system; the 1998 A. Clifford Barger mentorship award from Harvard Medical School; election to the Harvard Academy of Scholars in 2002, and the award - by vote of the graduating class - for the best pre-clinical instructor at Harvard Medical School in both 1999 and 2000.

He took his first faculty position at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine in Philadelphia in 1985, where he was an Assistant Professor and director of the hospital's coagulation laboratory. In 1989, he became Director of Clinical Laboratories at the Massachusetts General Hospital and was appointed to faculty in pathology at Harvard Medical School.

His research program, with more than 100 peer reviewed publications, has focused on fatty acids and their metabolites. His research group is focused on the study of fatty acid ethyl esters, which are esterification products of fatty acid and ethanol. Dr. Laposata's clinical expertise is in the field of blood coagulation, with a special expertise in the diagnosis of hypercoagulable states.

Technical Advancement

Carl Wittwer, MD, PhD - In a conversation a few years ago, Dr Wittwer's father noted that "Carl was like many boys his age always disassembling electronic devices, like the family television. What made Carl unusual, however, was the devices always worked after he had reassembled them!" Dr. Carl Wittwer grew up to receive both an M.D. and Ph.D. and to become a world leader in the translation of molecular biology into the practice of laboratory medicine.

Dr. Wittwer is Professor of Pathology at the University of Utah Medical School, Vice President of Technologies at Salt Lake City's Associated Regional University Pathologists (ARUP), where he helped to establish the Clinical Molecular Pathology Laboratory, and Chief Science Officer/Vice President for Research of Idaho Technology, a small company he co founded to commercialize technology developed in his University laboratory.

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Dr. Wittwer's pioneering work in the early 1990's led to the development of the Light Cycler® system, a PCR amplification and detection instrument which revolutionized molecular diagnostic testing cutting processing times from 4 hours to 20 minutes, greatly advancing the application of PCR to the practice of laboratory medicine and research, and most recently a portable version of the Light Cycler® system was selected as the real-time PCR platform for U.S. military defense against biological weapons.

In the mid 90's Dr. Wittwer adapted flow cytometry optics to thermal cycling for real-time PCR monitoring and introduced SYBR Green I, fluorescent hybridization probes and melting analysis to real time PCR. He has continued his research in PCR technology supported by the NIH, the Whitaker Foundation for Biomedical Engineering, private industry, and the State of Utah, and since 2003 he has directed the State of Utah Center of Excellence on "Homogeneous DNA Analysis" in an effort to simplify DNA analysis by eliminating separation steps, electrophoresis, and expensive oligonucleotide probe requirements in mutation scanning and genotyping. His work has provided the world with technological tools greatly advancing the application of molecular testing to the practice of clinical laboratory medicine.

Organizational Leadership

Dennis S. O'Leary, MD, is president of the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations. Under Dr. O'Leary's leadership, the Joint Commission has successfully transformed its accreditation process to become patient-centered and to emphasize the evaluation of actual organization performance. This transformation has set the stage for the progressive introduction of outcomes measures into the accreditation process. Dr. O'Leary has also led the Joint Commission's efforts to make meaningful organization performance information available to the public, and spearheaded the recent launch of Joint Commission's public policy initiatives. The latter have addressed emergency preparedness, health professional education reform, and tort resolution and injury prevention, among others. These investments have permitted the Joint Commission to make giant strides toward meeting its public accountabilities for improving the quality of care provided by health care organizations.

Prior to joining the Joint Commission, Dr. O'Leary served as dean for Clinical Affairs at the George Washington University Medical Center and vice president of the George Washington University Health Plan, an academic HMO.

Organizational Leadership

Kenneth W. Kizer, MD, MPH, is president and chief executive officer of the National Quality Forum (NQF), a private, non-profit organization based in Washington, D.C. Created in 1999, the NQF's mission is to improve American health care through endorsement of consensus-based national standards for measurement and public reporting of health care performance data that provides meaningful information about whether care is safe, timely patient-centered, beneficial, equitable and efficient.

Prior to joining the NQF in 1999, Kizer served five years as Under Secretary for Health in the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. In this capacity, he was the highest ranking physician in the federal government and chief executive officer of the Veteran's Health Care System. Previously, he was director of the California Department of Health Services and that state's top health official for six years. Prior to that, he was Chief of Public Health for California and director of the California Emergency Medical Services Authority. Kizer was in both private and academic practice of emergency medicine for more than 15 years, and was a private consultant in medical toxicology for much of that time. He has been a consultant on health care matters to several foreign countries, and currently serves as a medical advisor to a number of companies.

Kizer is board certified in six medical specialties and/or subspecialties. He is an honors graduate of Stanford University, and the University of California, Los Angeles.

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Career Leadership

George D. Lundberg, MD - A 1995 “pioneer” of the medical internet, Dr. Lundberg was born in Florida, grew up in LA (Lower Alabama) and holds earned and honorary degrees from North Park College, Baylor University, the University of Alabama (Birmingham and Tuscaloosa), the State University of New York, Syracuse, Thomas Jefferson University, and the Medical College of Ohio. He completed a clinical internship in Hawaii and a pathology residency in San Antonio. He served in the US army during the Vietnam War in San Francisco and El Paso, leaving as a lieutenant colonel after 11 years. Dr. Lundberg was then Professor of Pathology and Associate Director of Laboratories at the Los Angeles County/USC Medical Center for 10 years, and for five years was Professor and Chair of Pathology at the University of California-Davis. Dr. Lundberg is a member of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences and he holds academic appointments as a professor at Northwestern and Harvard. Dr. Lundberg has worked in tropical medicine in Central America and Forensic Medicine in New York, Sweden and England. His major professional interests are toxicology, violence, communication, physician behavior, strategic management, and health system reform. He is past President of the American Society of Clinical Pathologists (ASCP). From 1982 to 1999, Dr. Lundberg was at the American Medical Association (AMA) as Editor in Chief, Scientific Information and Multimedia with editorial responsibility for its 39 medical journals, American Medical News, and various Internet products, and the Editor of JAMA. Dr. Lundberg was a pioneer in both laboratory management and laboratory test use. He is credited with creating the system of Critical Laboratory Values, writing about patient focused laboratory organization, and establishing a long-running series on optimal laboratory use in JAMA. The publication of his own manuscripts and those he oversaw, have had a tremendous impact on the practice of medicine and especially pathology and laboratory medicine. He wrote editorials and published articles, especially in JAMA theme issues on such topics as gun violence, boxing, the autopsy, medical errors, tobacco, prevention of nuclear war, and the role of physicians in easing the ills of terminal patients that have reshaped the dialogue and landscape on numerous issues of public concern.

Fortunately, Dr. Lundberg saw the writing on the wall and knew the future was not on the wall or in print media but in the omnipotent Internet. Accordingly, after having founded the JAMA website in 1995, in 1999 Dr. Lundberg became Editor in Chief of Medscape, the world's leading site for health and medical information on the Internet and the founding Editor in Chief of both Medscape General Medicine and CBS HealthWatch.com. In 2002, Dr. Lundberg became Special Healthcare Advisor to the Chairman and CEO of WebMD and remains the Editor of www.MedGenMed.com, the world's first still only exclusively electronic, primary source, peer reviewed, general medical journal. Dr. Lundberg's 2001 book *Severed Trust* focused on the drifting of medicine from profession to business and in so doing losing its focus on patient care. He provides a detailed framework to alter payment and to rebuild our healthcare system in the 2002 paperback version of *Severed Trust*. In 2000, the Industry Standard dubbed Dr. Lundberg "Online Health Care's Medicine Man."

Distinguished Achievement

David M. Eddy, MD, PhD is a physician-mathematician and independent consultant living in Aspen, Colorado. Starting more than 25 years ago he wrote the first national guideline explicitly based on evidence, wrote the seminal paper on the role of guidelines in medical decision, was the first to apply Markov models to clinical problems, wrote the original criteria for coverage decisions, and is credited with coining the term “evidence-based”. The author of five books, more than 100 first-authored articles, and a series of 30 essays for the Journal of the American Medical Association, his writings span from technical mathematical theories to broad health policy topics. He has received top national and international awards in several different fields, including applied mathematics, health technology assessment, health care quality, and outcomes research. He has been elected or appointed to more than forty national and international boards and commissions -- including Consumers Union, the National Board of Mathematics, the World Health Organization Panel of Experts, The Blue Cross Blue Shield Medical Advisory Panel, and the National Committee for Quality Assurance – and is a member of the Institute of Medicine/National Academy of Sciences. He was a Professor of Engineering and Medicine at Stanford, and the J. Alexander McMahon Professor of Health Policy and Management at Duke University, before he resigned to become an independent researcher and writer. His current work is the Archimedes Project, a mathematical model that spans from human anatomy and biology, to health care systems.