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Synchronizing the world of women's health: young Turks and transformational leaders report for duty

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Abstract

Health care and research together in one system is a grand paradigm shift. Partnering with patients via social media can make it real.

Change is possible. As I write this response Egypt is undergoing tremendous change. Social media is at its heart (1). The time is now for Young Turks and transformational leaders to report for duty in many arenas. Change is also possible in how we approach women's health. Those interested in developing a community of practice around primary ovarian insufficiency (POI) will be gratified to read the three positive responses to the Cooper et al. article. All three support a new paradigm for research and patient care, one that has implications beyond POI. Social media will be at the heart of the needed change.

Patients with POI need care and research that takes an integrative approach as opposed to the standard reductionist silo approach. Dr. Seifer opines that "strategic planning is long overdue." Dr. Frankfurter sums it up by "Organizational remodeling that uses patient and stakeholder expertise to drive research and resource allocation is a 21st-century approach to problem solving." Doctor Sullivan has a dream, that "perhaps Dr. Cooper's integrated umbrella of care will start a trend that will eventually be applied in all health care settings." Indeed, paradigm shifts on a grand scale—a dream? Yes, but one worth making into reality. Years ago reproductive medicine led a paradigm shift to preventative care by bringing the Pap smear to the clinic. Reproductive medicine could also lead a paradigm shift to integrative care and research by taking a community of practice approach to women's health.

There are so many areas in need of research and better care. Our experiences with patients on a daily basis can give each of us a wake-up call in this regard. Each wake-up call can open an area of research for another Young Turk or transformational leader. For example, a while back our group saw a teenaged girl with POI. Based on discussions with our Spiritual Ministry Department at the NIH Clinical Center it became clear that we needed to take a family systems approach to manage the situation appropriately. This required diverse expertise, and obviously input from the family. The result was the creation of the Primary Ovarian Insufficiency Recovery Group, a collaboration between Rachel's Well and the NIH/

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National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Intramural Research Program on Reproductive and Adult Endocrinology. The first publication from this particular community of practice is now in press in the *Journal of Pediatric and Adolescent Gynecology* under the title “A family systems approach to primary ovarian insufficiency” (2).

An activist group of women with POI have written, “It has been said that governmental bureaucracies lack the animating life force that is normally provided by the human conscience” (3). These women harnessed their pain to drive a passion for helping other women. They call for a community consortium to provide a “governmental conscience.” Dr. Frankfurter points to the fundamental components: patients, front-line practitioners, and education to coordinate these two interests. These are indeed critical components of change. Social media can bring this all together.

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