Editorial

SAM, MOC, CME . . . WTF?

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Is there another profession that has as many postgraduate educational requirements as the medical profession? That question isn't intended to sound snarky—it's actually intended to be a question (with perhaps a little snark thrown in for good measure, but you get my point).

I am amazed at the amount of continuing formal education that individuals who are highly trained and practicing their skill daily must undergo. It isn't actually the amount of education that bothers me; I rather enjoy learning new skill sets and procedures, and hearing about what other IRs are doing around the country. Some of the cutting-edge stuff continues to amaze me. Just last March, Bill Rilling, MD, came to Colorado to ski . . . er, to lecture to our state radiological society . . . and showed incredible fetal interventions he and his partners at the Medical College of Wisconsin are performing. Just today I went through the abstracts presented at ARRS 2012; I remain impressed with the amount of primary research going on in our field. It is vital for us as medical practitioners to keep up with the latest and greatest developments in our field. That is what continuing medical education (CME) credits forced (allowed?) us to do in the past, and I've never dismissed the importance of keeping up to date.

But what happened? Why was that not considered enough? I hate to sound like an old fuddy-duddy, but at what point was it decided that we as a collective field have to go beyond educating ourselves in the ways in which we see fit, and in ways that are most important to our personal practices,

and instead have education thrust on us? Really—does anyone think that sitting through a lecture with an audience-response device in hand that tracks our answers to questions on the screen make us *learn* better than just taking in the lecture? I suppose it does show that we know how to take tests, but I think we've already established that. And does an MOC process really add value to our practice, particularly when the process is required of us?

I don't personally blame any one entity for the changes that have occurred, this depersonalization of our own individual education. I don't blame the board because they are following the path that they feel is being dictated to them by other specialties (not to mention CNN). And in the very near future, our keeping up to date with the maintenance of certification (MOC) process is going to be publicized, so any potential patient or caregiver can look up our name online to determine whether or not we are involved in the MOC process. Perhaps that wouldn't bother me if I felt that the entire process had some merit in determining who is a good physician and who is not a good physician. Alas, at this point in time I'm just not convinced that this is the case.

Who is to blame, then? Perhaps no one, and perhaps the changes that we are seeing are one of those proverbial signs of the times, this homogenization and depersonalization of society as a whole, where what is good and essential for one is required of all. But that, I suppose, is a topic for a future editorial. My self-assessment module (SAM) course is beginning and I have to find my clicker.

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