

2009 NASPAG Young Scholars Grant Recipients



I would like to first thank the NASPAG resident scholar program for their sponsorship. It was a great meeting filled with a variety of information ranging from basic science research to robotic surgeries. In three short days, I learned the latest NIH research in primary ovarian insufficiency, became more confident in managing contraception for adolescents, and saw the role of robotic surgeries for our pediatric/adolescent gynecology population.

As our knowledge of medicine grows, so does the need for different disciplines to collaborate in order to improve patient care. I feel like the 2009 NASPAG meeting exemplified this principle. I met a wide range of healthcare providers from not only ob/gyn but different disciplines within pediatrics as well. This was a truly valuable

experience that will certainly change the way I approach the pediatric/adolescent patient population and I sincerely hope that you will be able to provide this valuable experience to other residents-in-training in the future.

Jonathan Kim, MD



As soon as I received the emailing informing me of the NASPAG grant I immediately decided to apply. I entered the field of Obstetrics and Gynecology in part because of my interest in adolescent healthcare. Attending the conference solidified this interest as well as helped expand my understanding of the intricacies of this subfield. Since attending the conference I have approached situations differently and have often reflected back to the key points I learned during those days.

I recently had the opportunity to apply some of the techniques I learned about for examining a pediatric or adolescent patient. I was working a night shift on Labor and Delivery and we received a call from the ER stating that they had a thirteen year old who presented with a history of sexual abuse who had been told that day that she was approximately eight months pregnant. After a thorough exam in the ER the patient was transferred to L&D so that we could establish her prenatal care. The patient, a doe-eyed sweet girl who was already exhausted from the revelation to her parents that she had been sexually abused by her older cousin for months, was very clearly pregnant. Her family and the patient had obviously been in denial of the changes going on with her body. I approached the family and delicately questioned them on the circumstances leading to their arrival to the hospital. The girl had fainted at school and in trying to discern the cause, she was found to be pregnant and consequently the history of abuse had emerged. I first explained to the patient and her mother in words what our exam would entail, it was the patient's first gynecologic exam and I wanted her to be mentally prepared. After verbalizing the tests we would do and details of the exam, I showed her the speculum and explained its purpose. It is intuitive that a young girl would be afraid of the exam, it is not necessarily intuitive how to try to minimize this fear. The steps I took were based on things I learned during the conference as well as training at my residency program. This background of training allowed me to successfully create a sense of trust with the patient. I feel fairly confident of my success in comforting her because just two days later while I was at the grocery store I felt a tap on my shoulder and when I turned to look, there was my patient who had come over to me to say hello.

As illustrated by my story of my recent patient interaction, at the conference I learned crucial skills as well as valuable updates in medicine such as cervical dysplasia screening guidelines that I have employed in my practice. The conference was also a great opportunity to get an idea of the kind of research going on in Pediatric and Adolescent Gynecology and was an important starting point for research projects I would like to develop in the future. I would recommend attending the conference to any healthcare professional interested in the field.

Lucia Franca, MD



Dear Dr. Silva, I am exceptionally thankful to the NASPAG association and yourself, as a representative, for creating such a great learning experience through the Young Scholars Grant. I was honored to receive the award and having the opportunity to attend the NASPAG annual conference. Meeting such influential members of the NASPAG executive board such as Drs Strickland and Sanfilippo, and hearing about their passion and commitment to research and teaching in the field of pediatric and adolescent gynecology was very memorable. The presentations and posters were informative and well done. As a result, I am spreading the word to lower levels in my program to apply for this grant and I am planning on submitting an abstract of my own for next year. Being able to attend the NASPAG meeting really helped enforce my interest in pediatric and adolescent gynecology and motivated me to be a proactive member. Thank you so much again for this opportunity.

Roxanne Pero, MD

Shelley Aggarwal MD, MS

NASPAG Conference Experience

One of my most poignant memories of childhood is of deciding to be a doctor. I was eight, and had the very innocent intention of “wanting to help people.” Exactly what that ideal of “help” entailed is not something that I understood until I pursued my training in medicine and subsequently felt compelled to pursue a career in adolescent health. The unique needs of young people at crucial points of transition, balanced with multiple opportunities for medical and social activism is what draws me to adolescent health. These reasons and many others are at the heart of why I thoroughly enjoyed being a participant of the North American Society for Pediatric and Adolescent Gynecology (NASPAG) Conference. I left with significantly more multidisciplinary knowledge, enriching my individual practice and training. More importantly however, due to the variety of workshops and the spirited discussions on issues such as body image, HIV care, surgical reconstruction, guidelines for bariatric surgery to name a few, I also felt reconnected with those young ideals of advocacy and assistance that have made me passionate about a career in adolescent health.

Attending lectures either moderated or presented by physician leaders in the field of pediatric and adolescent gynecology, particularly female physician leaders, was inspiring. In addition to the lectures, the occasions to socialize with participants allowed me to personally access field innovators, directly addressing questions or simply having a conversation, later being able to boast that I spoke with Dr. So and So who pioneered such and such. As a physician young in her career, I found this experience especially enjoyable. I think a forum that allows for an informal discussion between practitioners in a variety of career stages would be a wonderful way to promote mentoring at the conference.

The multidisciplinary emphasis at NASPAG is one of its notable strengths. I found interacting with Obstetrics and Gynecology practitioners allowed for a wider scope of information and knowledge sharing between subspecialties. Being able to dialogue with surgical practitioners encouraged for well rounded discussions, and occasional debate that I believe led to new understandings about standards of care and decision making in reference to the needs of young women. The commonalities and differences in approach to the patient, the physical exam, and ultimately clinical care coordination were educational and helpful for my own practice. I look forward to more workshops with dialogue between medical and surgical practitioners in order to promote understanding about unique approaches to care.

It was a great pleasure to attend NASPAG, and a privilege to be selected by the grant committee. I plan to make this conference a regular part of my continuing education and will encourage other physicians, particularly those still in training to widen their breadth of knowledge with NASPAG as well.

Mariso Bahamonde, MD

This was my first time at a NASPAG meeting. I am an Adolescent Medicine fellow and the meeting was extremely useful for my training. From the very first talk on HPV vaccination to the very last one on body image, all the topics were relevant.

For me, the most useful topic discussed was chronic pelvic pain. This is a problem that can sometimes be very difficult to deal with. It was great to hear what they do in other centers and how others approach these patients. Also, it was very pleasant to meet and interact with other health professional that share my same interests. I would love to attend this meeting yearly.