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the standard of care, but finances prevent people from receiving that standard of care, then we're backing away from evidence-based practice," he says. "If we're serious about both the science and functional perspectives of our patients, we need to look at the economic side—find what is the most functional for the best price. Then somehow it has to become legislative policy. Is our patient care going to be about best practices or best finances?"

Sharing Insights

For those who are just beginning their O&P careers, Boomer advises them to "pick a really good residency site—not just a job, but rather a site that will give them the training and foundation they need." Her own residency at Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation Hospital, Grand Rapids, Michigan, introduced her to cranial remodeling, which has become her specialty.

Jacobsen also found this to be true. His work at the University of Washington, Seattle, as a research engineer ignited his desire to pursue a career in O&P. His residency at Dynamic Orthotics and Prosthetics, Houston, Texas, under president Tom DiBello, CO, LO, FAAOP, fanned the flames and honed his skills. His paper on short-term, residual-limb volume change was named by the Academy as among the "Best of the Resident Directed Studies," and has been published online at www.oandp.org. Jacobsen has gone on to participate in the Research Education Committee and the Outcomes Research Committee of the Academy and serves as an NCOPE residency liaison.

Jacobsen also has developed an office-note computer program, which has been used extensively at Dynamic O&P to document patients' treatment and progress. He says he is currently building the program into "web-based clinical software that will attempt to bring evidence from the literature into the clinical setting."

Highsmith says, "You need to be a role model for your patients, family, and those you mentor. For instance, if you advocate an active, healthy lifestyle, you need to live it. Provide quality patient care, use evidence-based practice, be involved in professional associations, keep up with contemporary practices." He also urges a balanced lifestyle regarding work and time for family, recreation, and a spiritual component.

Today sets the stage for tomorrow, and the new generation of young Turks is playing a powerful part in shaping the future of the O&P profession. As advances in technology, education, and research soar upward, tough economic realities threaten to bring them back down to earth. Exciting opportunities along with formidable challenges are confronting O&P. Whatever the future holds, the motto of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in World War II may well fit O&P's up-and-comers: "The difficult we do immediately; the impossible takes a little longer." **O&P EDGE**

Miki Fairley is a freelance writer based in southwest Colorado. She can be reached at miki.fairley@gmail.com

Editor's note: To read about more young Turks, see the February 14 edition of EDGE Direct.



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