



# THE FELLOWSHIP

The Newsletter of the **FOUNDATION for SURGICAL FELLOWSHIPS**



Winter 2012

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## From the President

Greg Stiegmann, MD

### Committed to leading the way for innovative surgical education and patient care



Dr. Greg Stiegmann

I am proud to be part of the leadership and granting efforts of the Foundation for Surgical Fellowships. In just two years, the Foundation has been able to expand minimally invasive training in the surgical fields of Bariatric, Colon and Rectal, Hepato-Biliary, General MIS, and Thoracic to more than 145 Fellowship programs. This funding will impact our practice of surgery today, and provide opportunities to open new fields of treatment for the future.

Participating in the work of the Foundation allows all involved to make a significant impact on surgical innovation and education while saving lives. Our responsibility is to assure that this community builds on the best of what already exists in the field, that it has access to the external expertise it needs when it needs it, and systematic learning occurs about the problems confronted and interventions attempted in response. In this latter regard, our goal is not to solve this problem in a few places, but rather to orchestrate around the efforts of the network a common knowledge development and management system.

The Foundation was able to provide over \$8 million in fellowship grants in its first years of service, thanks to our generous donors. In our first year of granting, we were proud to fund 70% of our total requests. Unfortunately, this left out many qualified applicants because there were not enough funds to go to all of the programs seeking to train on advanced procedure. My colleagues and I on the FSF Board are aware of the pressures that medical service providers are under to meet growing needs in the face of reduced funding. We remain dedicated to growing our capacity to fund these vital training opportunities, and not just in a few places, but also to extend the benefits of MIS procedures nationwide, and in particular to areas that currently have limited access to MIS trained surgeons.

***The Foundation was able to provide over \$8 million in fellowship grants in its first years of service...fund[ing] 70% of our total requests.***

I look forward to overseeing the growth of the Foundation during my term. The training opportunities sponsored by our Foundation are opening the door for new opportunities to enhance patient safety, develop innovative procedures, and enhance quality of life.

Please contact Adeena Bleich, the Executive Director of the Foundation at [Adeena@SurgicalFellowships.org](mailto:Adeena@SurgicalFellowships.org) if you would like to join us in the work we are doing.

Sincerely,  
Greg Stiegmann, MD  
President, FSF

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## SAVE-THE-DATE

### Meet and Mingle with the Minds of Advanced Surgery

March 8, 2012

Please join the Foundation for Surgical Fellowships, the Fellowship Council, and the Society of American Gastrointestinal and Endoscopic Surgeons for a reception and presentation celebrating the importance of Advanced Surgical training.

This program will take place at the San Diego Convention Center during SAGES Surgical Spring Week. For more information, please contact the Foundation at 310.424.3332.

By Invitation Only.  
More Information to Follow.

## Fellowships Associated with Improved Outcomes for Patients

G. P. Kohn, J. A. Galanko, D. W. Overby, T. M. Farrell

**Source:** Department of Surgery, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC, USA. gkohn@UpperGI.net. **Abstract:** High Case Volumes and Surgical Fellowships Are Associated With Improved Outcomes for Bariatric Surgery Patients: A Justification of Current Credentialing Initiatives for Practice and Training

### Background

Recent years have seen the establishment of bariatric surgery credentialing processes, center-of-excellence programs, and fellowship training positions. The effects of center-of-excellence status and of the presence of training programs have not previously been examined. The objective of this study was to examine the effects of case volume, center-of-excellence status, and training programs on early outcomes of bariatric surgery.

*Continued on page 3*

**“The minimally invasive fellowship awarded to the UVA by the Foundation for Surgical Fellowships (FSF) quite honestly has been one of the best experiences of my life. The MIS cases were balanced, advanced and plentiful. We had so many cases that I was not in competition with the Resident. I had attending privileges and was able to be trained on some of the most advanced and state of the art minimally invasive procedures. I was treated as a junior partner and was not used as an extra Chief resident. The program has prepared me to provide a better level of patient care and I highly recommend this outstanding program.”**

-MIS FSF Fellow, University of Virginia

## RECOGNIZING PARTNERS: Ethicon Endo-Surgery

### For Ethicon Endo-Surgery, Transforming Patient Care Starts with Education

Optimal patient outcomes and future surgical advancements begin with education. It's that simple. That's why Cincinnati, Ohio-based Ethicon Endo-Surgery (EES) helped to found and continues to support the Foundation for Surgical Fellowships (FSF). EES is the global market leader in providing comprehensive surgical solutions to improve patient outcomes. The company's products are used in millions of minimally invasive and traditional open surgical procedures worldwide each year, including general, bariatric, colorectal, thoracic, urology, and gynecologic surgeries. "EES has a longstanding commitment to providing education and training for surgeons, nurses, residents and other health care professionals," explains Pamela Martin, MD, FACS, EES Director of Medical and Professional Education. "Supporting the FSF is an extension of that commitment," she says, "We've been funding fellowships for a long time, but funding fellowships through a non-biased, third-party foundation—rather than directly—enables EES to use its resources more effectively."



**Ethicon  
Endo-Surgery**

PART OF THE Johnson & Johnson FAMILY OF COMPANIES



Pamela Martin, MD, FACS, EES Director of Medical and Professional Education, and David Venner, EES Vice President of Commercial Operations, receive the Certificate of Appreciation on behalf of Ethicon-Endo Surgery from FSF, pictured with Dr. Greg Stiegmann, FSF President.

"The FSF has a knowledge-base that we can't replicate," Dr. Martin says. "They can provide a more in-depth review of individual programs. Their board includes leaders in the field of minimally invasive surgery and many of them have spent years training fellows in their practice. As thought-leaders in their areas, they bring an additional level of expertise to make sure the best programs are receiving the available funds."

Sponsoring fellowships through the FSF likewise enables EES to focus on its own extensive educational offerings, which include webinars, e-learning modules, preceptorships, proctorships, and face-to-face courses. More than 100,000 healthcare professionals have been trained by the Endo-Surgery Institute since the first was opened in 1992. "We've been committed and we'll remain committed to education and training because it's the right thing to do for patients," Dr. Martin says.

Continued from page 2.

### Study Design

Data were obtained from the Nationwide Inpatient Sample from 1998 to 2006. Quantification of patient comorbidities was made using the Charlson Index. Using logistic regression modeling, annual case volumes were analyzed for an association with each institution's center-of-excellence status and training program status. Risk-adjusted outcomes measures were calculated for these hospital-level parameters.

### Results

Data from 102,069 bariatric operations were obtained. Adjusting for comorbidities, greater bariatric case volume was associated with improvements in the incidence of total complications (odds ratio [OR] 0.99937 for each single case increase,  $p = 0.01$ ), in-hospital mortality (OR 0.99717,  $p < 0.01$ ), and most other complications. Hospitals with a Fellowship Council-affiliated gastrointestinal surgery training program were associated with risk-adjusted improvements in rates of splenectomy (OR 0.2853,  $p < 0.001$ ) and bacterial pneumonias (OR 0.65898,  $p = 0.02$ ). Center-of-excellence status, irrespective of the accrediting entity, had minimal independent association with outcomes. A surgical residency program had a varying association with outcomes.

### Conclusions

The hypothesized positive volume-outcomes relationship of bariatric surgery is shown without arbitrarily categorizing hospitals to case volume groups, by analysis of volume as a continuous variable. Institutions with a dedicated fellowship training program have also been shown, in part, to be associated with improved outcomes. The concept of volume-dependent center-of-excellence programs is supported, although no independent association with the credentialing process is noted.

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## FSF Awards Statistics

2011-2012	2012-2013
Bariatric: 49	Bariatric: 34
Thoracic: 15	Thoracic: 13
HPB: 7	HPB: 8
MIS: 57	MIS: 41
Colorectal: 17	Colorectal: 16
<hr/>	
Total: 70%	MIS/BAR: 35
Bariatric: 92%	Total: 88%
Thoracic: 94%	Bariatric: 87%
MIS: 54%	BAR/MIS: 83%
HPB: 70%	Thoracic: 100%
Colorectal: 68%	MIS: 89%
	HPB: 100%
	Colorectal: 89%

### Fellowship Programs Awarded for 2011-2012 and 2012-2013

Please visit [www.surgicalfellowships.org/awards.php](http://www.surgicalfellowships.org/awards.php) for a full listing.

## RECOGNIZING PARTNERS: Covidien

### Supporting World Class Surgical Training and Innovation

Covidien has a 40 year history of supporting advanced medical training in a wide variety of clinical education programs for surgeons, nurses, allied health personnel, fellows, residents, and other members of the healthcare profession. Over the course of these many years, Covidien has helped to ensure the training of 280,000 surgeons, and they continue this work by joining forces with the FSF. Through training healthcare professionals on the safe and effective use of their instruments and utilizing procedural and evidence based medical education activities, Covidien's Professional Affairs & Clinical Education Team is committed to enriching the surgical community and enhancing patient outcomes.

Participating in and supporting the work of the Foundation for Surgical Fellowships (FSF) is a natural next step in surgical innovation for the company. "Given the advancement of technology in healthcare today, the provider/industry relationship has never been more relevant or important, nor more scrutinized or challenged," said Dr. Michael Tarnoff, Covidien's Global Chief Medical Officer. "Our goal is to enhance innovation and patient safety by preserving the ability of healthcare professionals to partner with our company in an appropriate manner."

As a means to develop clinically relevant, innovative products, procedures, and training that continue to improve patient outcomes and safety, Covidien believes that ethical collaboration between industry and medical professionals remains more important than ever. Covidien President Rich Meelia noted, "Medical institution and resident interest in additional advanced training is fueling a great demand for funding for fellowship programs. Such post graduate education results in better patient outcomes and the more efficient delivery of healthcare. In order to meet the demand for sponsorship funding, Covidien is pleased to be a sponsor of the FSF, an independent entity that will manage the funding of fellowship programs around the United States. This new operating model will provide the financial underpinning for fellowship funding in the future and will promote greater transparency between industry and institution, while opening its doors to a wider range of donors."



Matt Fahy, Covidien Vice President, Corporate Professional Affairs, and Chuck Kennedy, Global Vice President Professional Affairs & Clinical Education, receive the Certificate of Appreciation on behalf of Covidien from FSF, pictured with Dr. Greg Stiegmann, FSF President.



## Mission Statement

The Foundation for Surgical Fellowships exists to fund high quality fellowships in various areas of surgery, including but not limited to flexible endoscopy, minimal access surgery and other related disciplines. Through a blinded application and review process, the Foundation will identify and distribute funds to qualified organizations based on criteria of excellence. The Fellowship Foundation will promote and support the continued availability of postgraduate surgical training opportunities of the highest quality.

## Vision Statement

The Foundation for Surgical Fellowships (FSF) envisions a surgical community that is better educated in advanced surgery with the ultimate goal of improved patient care.

## FSF Board of Directors

### PRESIDENT:

Greg Stiegmann, MD

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Top row from left: Jonathan Sackier, Anthony Senagore, Ravi Chari, Dennis Fowler, Greg Stiegmann, Andrew Resnick, Bruce Wolff, Richard Satava. Bottom row from left: Kenneth Forde, Thomas D'Amico, J. Patrick O'Leary, Edward Felix, Harvey Sugerman, Thomas Dent, Donald Risucci.

**The Foundation for Surgical Fellowships is currently accepting tax deductible contributions that would go toward expanding and strengthening our impact on advanced surgical education and training.**

By contributing to the Foundation for Surgical Fellowships, you are helping the Foundation achieve its vision of a medical community that is better educated in advanced surgery with the ultimate goal of improved patient care.

To learn more about how you can become involved, please contact our Development office at 310.424.3332, ext. 117, or email [info@surgicalfellowships.org](mailto:info@surgicalfellowships.org).



## Should Residents Do a Fellowship? Experts Explore the Pros and Cons

Click here to read  
the full article.



Or go to the Important Dates & News section at [www.surgicalfellowships.org](http://www.surgicalfellowships.org).