

The Journal of Education in Perioperative Medicine

ORIGINAL RESEARCH

Publication Rate of Abstracts Presented at the 2011-2019 Society for Education in Anesthesia Meetings

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INTRODUCTION

Scientific societies support the dissemination of ideas, innovations, discoveries, and findings through multiple media. Presentation at meetings enables the sharing of science in real time to audiences and allows for questions, feedback, and plans for collaboration. Publication of articles in peer-reviewed journals provides a standing record that allows for broad access and reference and often meets higher standards.

The Society for Education in Anesthesia (SEA) serves its mission to advance anesthesia education in part by providing opportunities to share abstracts on anesthesia education, through either oral or poster presentation, at its annual spring meetings. SEA meetings feature 2 abstract categories: Research in Education and Innovative Curriculum. The latter category represents work that is specific to the educational focus of societies such as SEA. The SEA Research Committee in particular is invested in the sharing of scholarly work on anesthesia education, serving its stated mission: “The SEA Research Committee’s mission is to support the SEA members’ endeavor to develop innovative educational curricula and successfully conduct original educational research projects. The ultimate goal is to facilitate disseminating these scholarly products and enrich the educational experience of the medical students, anesthesiology trainees, and faculty members nationally

and internationally.”¹ The SEA Research Committee, of which this study’s last author is chair and first author is chair-designee, serves this mission by reviewing the abstracts submitted for presentation at SEA annual meetings and by promoting further dissemination of this scholarly work through publication. Although dozens of projects pertaining to education in the specialty of anesthesiology are presented annually at the SEA spring meetings, the number of these works that go on to be published in PubMed-indexed journals remains unknown.

Several previous studies have investigated the rates of publication of abstracts presented at scientific meetings. Over the past decade, studies on abstracts presented at U.S.-based biomedical and health care specialty society meetings have reported overall publication rates of 21%-72.3% in PubMed-indexed journals.²⁻¹² However, to our knowledge, studies reporting the rates of publication of abstracts of analogous societies focused on education within a medical specialty, such as the Association for Surgical Education, have not been published. Our study sought to elucidate the rate at which abstracts presented at SEA spring meetings over a 9-year period (2011-2019) went on to be published in PubMed-indexed journals. In the interest of evaluating further dissemination of curricula presented at SEA annual meetings, which are of particular interest in our education-focused society, we

investigated the publication rates of abstracts in the Innovative Curriculum and Research categories. We also sought to determine how featuring these curriculum abstracts influenced the overall publication rate of the abstracts, testing a hypothesis that abstracts submitted in the Research category were published at a higher rate than abstracts submitted in the Innovative Curriculum category. We also investigated the time between meeting presentation and journal publication, as well as the journals publishing the articles representing these works.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

We gathered information pertaining to abstracts presented at SEA spring meetings from 2011-2019 from meeting brochures and abstract review records archived annually. We catalogued information on each abstract, including authors, affiliated institutions of the first authors, titles, years of presentation, and categories (Research vs Curriculum).

For each abstract, we searched PubMed to find publications that reported the work presented at SEA annual meetings. Because we anticipated that titles and listed authors may change from abstract presentation to its corresponding manuscript publication, we accounted for these differences by performing a search for related works in PubMed with search criteria including the first author’s last name and first initial,

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both as listed on the submitted abstract. This search strategy required that the first author of the abstract be listed as an author in the published manuscript, but not necessarily as first author. This search strategy potentially excluded manuscripts if they did not include the first author of the abstract. From this list that included published articles that corresponded as well as those that did not correspond to the work presented in the abstracts, we narrowed those results by filtering out entries whose authors had institutions that did not match the institution of the abstract's first author.

Among the PubMed hits that we identified as potential matches to the SEA meeting abstracts, we identified matches between the published articles' work and the work presented at the meetings by reviewing the titles and abstracts of the PubMed results. We noted the matches, recording the articles' authors, titles, journals, and publication dates. Three different authors performed data searches and any discrepancies were resolved by further discussion among the authors.

The total numbers of abstract presentations and their corresponding PubMed-indexed publications per abstract category per presentation year were described. The rate of publication was calculated for each abstract category as well for both categories combined for the entire study period. We calculated the number of years from presentation to publication for each abstract-article pair. A list of PubMed-indexed journals in which the abstract-based manuscripts were published with the numbers of such publications was created.

Data were described in numbers and percentages. The number of years from presentation to publication for each abstract-article pair was described with the mean \pm standard deviation. The publication rates of each abstract category were calculated and compared by calculating the odds ratio (OR) and using a Pearson χ^2 test. A *P* value of less than .05 was considered statistically significant. The analysis was performed using Microsoft Excel for Mac, version 16.54.

RESULTS

Among 371 abstracts submitted for presentation at SEA spring meetings from 2011-2019, a total of 351 (94.6%) abstracts (128 in the Research category and 223 in the Curriculum category) were accepted and presented at the meetings (Figure 1).

A total of 52 abstracts were published as PubMed-indexed articles, which yielded an overall publication rate of 15% (Figure 1). Table 1 lists the PubMed-indexed articles corresponding to the abstracts presented at SEA annual spring meetings. The publication rate of Research abstracts, 24.2% (31/128), was significantly higher than that of Curriculum abstracts, 9.4% (21/223), with an OR of 3.1 (95% confidence interval, 1.7-5.6; *P* = .0003).

Among the abstracts that resulted in publications in PubMed-indexed journals, the gap between abstract presentation and publication was 1.7 ± 1.3 years. Twenty different journals published these 52 abstract works (Table 2); the journals with the most abstract publications were *The Journal of Education in Perioperative Medicine* (17; 32%), followed by *Anesthesia & Analgesia* (5; 10%) and *Journal of Clinical Anesthesia* (5; 10%).

DISCUSSION

Our study revealed that 15% of the 351 abstracts presented at SEA spring meetings from 2011-2019 went on to be published as articles in PubMed-indexed journals an average of 1.7 years after presentation. Compared with the Curriculum abstracts, the Research abstracts were 3.1 times more likely to go on to publication. Twenty different journals published these works, led by *The Journal for Education in Perioperative Medicine*, which is the official journal of SEA.

This overall publication rate for abstracts published at SEA meetings fell below the 21%-72.3% publication rates previously reported in the past decade for other biomedical and health care specialty society meetings.²⁻¹²

Whereas SEA is a health care specialty society like those featured in the 11 studies referenced in the previous paragraph, it is important to note that its focus on education and training differs from the clinical focus of these other societies. This difference in

focus may account for the publication rate that falls outside the range reported for the other societies. No analogous article reporting on publication rates of abstracts of other societies with a focus on education in clinical specialties, such as the Association for Surgical Education, could be found in the PubMed database. However, a study by Sawatsky et al¹³ reported the publication rate (44%) of a subset of abstracts presented at the Society of General Internal Medicine Annual Meeting that were identified as medical education abstracts.

The lower rate of publication of abstracts in the Innovative Curriculum category largely explains why the overall rate falls below the publication rates of other societies' abstracts. This finding is consistent with a finding by Sawatsky et al¹³ that the Society of General Internal Medicine's innovations in medical education abstracts were published at a significantly less frequent rate than their scientific abstracts on medical education (34% vs 53%, respectively).

We speculate that a major factor contributing to the lower odds of publication of curriculum abstracts than of research abstracts is the curriculum abstract presenters' failure to present meaningful results that demonstrate the impact of their curricula. To enhance the quality of curriculum abstracts and their suitability for publication, educators should critically consider and select methods that evaluate the effectiveness of the curricula at the time of planning and development. Furthermore, these educators should consider submission to journals that feature publication of curriculum abstracts, such as MedEdPORTAL (<https://www.mededportal.org>).

The low rate of publication of works presented as abstracts at SEA meetings is also attributable in part to an inclusive paradigm for accepting submitted abstracts. The high acceptance rate (94.6%) indicates less-stringent criteria for abstract acceptance than would be used for manuscripts submitted for publication. Furthermore, the acceptance of abstracts that report on projects that have not been completed also contributes to the low publication rate. As members of the SEA Research Committee tasked with evaluating

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the submitted abstracts, 2 of the authors of this manuscript (T.S. and D.A.C.), serving as chair and chair-designee, respectively, of the SEA Research Committee, have noted over several years of reviewing abstracts that many of the abstracts reported incomplete projects, including pilot studies and even proposals for research studies and curricular interventions. Walsh et al¹⁴ previously found that the publication of “work in progress” abstracts presented at Research in Medical Education and Canadian Conference on Medical Education meetings to have significantly lower publication rates than abstracts reporting completed work (22.0% vs 41.7%, respectively).

The Research Committee responded to this deficiency by making complete projects with full reporting of final results a mandatory criterion for acceptance of abstracts for presentation in the Research and Innovative Curriculum categories beginning with the 2021 SEA Spring Meeting. The concurrent development of a third category for submission, Innovative Ideas, provides an opportunity for submission of proposals for projects and incomplete work. Rather than accept these proposals as abstracts for presentation in the Research and Curriculum categories, the Research Committee has referred selected proposals for presentation at an Idea Lab workshop featured at the past 3 SEA spring meetings, where the proposals’ authors receive feedback and recommendations from peers in attendance as well as expert facilitators. Also serving its mission to promote dissemination of discoveries and advancements in anesthesia education, the Research Committee recently developed a SEA Research Mentorship Program in which mentors with a record of success in publishing scholarly work provide longitudinal mentorship to peers who are developing and executing a project in anesthesia education. This mentorship program in its initial year focused on mentorship for research projects but is expanding its focus to aid in the development of curricular projects.

Our finding of a broad distribution of journals publishing these articles matches with results from analogous studies.

Hackett et al¹⁵ found 20 journals publishing 6 or more of the 913 published abstracts from International Liver Transplantation Society annual meetings. The average time from presentation to publication of SEA abstracts is just 1.7 years, a relatively low average time to publication, compared with the International Liver Transplantation Society abstracts, 90% of which went on to publication within 46 months (3.8 years).¹⁵

This study had several limitations. Consistent with analogous studies on the publication of work presented at other societies’ meetings, our data collection plan limited the search to publications indexed on PubMed, excluding publications indexed through other web search engines such as Google Scholar. Authors of other studies¹⁶ have called into question whether this search strategy could fully capture all the published works; however, our highly inclusive search strategy, followed by extensive evaluation of found candidate matches, lends assurance for the completeness of our findings. Our search would exclude works published after the period in which we performed the publication search; however, our finding of a confidence interval of 1.3 years around an average time from presentation to publication of 1.7 years lends assurance that very few of the abstracts from the 9 years of meetings had yet to appear in journals.

In summary, the low publication rate we discovered signals opportunities for new directions in our effort to serve SEA’s mission to promote the sharing of discoveries and advancements in anesthesia education. Formative feedback and mentorship such as that provided through the longitudinal SEA Research Mentorship Program and the Idea Lab Workshop at annual spring meetings will motivate and guide future endeavors for scholarly work in this area. Our future investigative efforts will focus on our abstract presenters’ and society members’ attitudes towards scholarly work and intention to engage in and ultimately publish their work, as well as the impact of the SEA Research Committee’s endeavors—including the Idea Lab Workshop and the Mentorship Program—to enhance the scholarly work in medical education and its dissemination.

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Abstract

Introduction: The Society for Education in Anesthesia (SEA) promotes dissemination of discoveries and innovations. We investigated the rate of publication of SEA Spring Meeting abstracts, hypothesizing that Research abstracts were published more frequently than Innovative Curriculum abstracts. We also studied the time between abstract presentation and publication and tracked the journals in which they were published.

Methods: All abstracts presented at SEA spring meetings from 2011-2019 were included. We searched PubMed for published articles that were based on those SEA abstracts. We calculated the overall publication rate and the respective publication rates for Research and Innovative Curriculum abstracts. We calculated odds ratio (OR) and performed the Pearson χ^2 test to compare publication rates between Research abstracts and Innovative Curriculum abstracts. We calculated the mean number of years between meeting presentation and publication and tabulated the number of works published in each journal.

Results: A total of 351 abstracts (128 Research and 223 Curriculum) were presented at SEA spring meetings. The overall publication rate was 15% (52/351). Research abstracts were published more frequently than Curriculum abstracts: 24.2% (31/128) versus 9.4% (21/223); OR = 3.1 (95% confidence interval, 1.7-5.6); P = .0003. The mean time from presentation to publication was 1.7 ± 1.3 years. The works appeared in 20 different journals.

Conclusion: SEA Spring Meeting abstracts were published less frequently than abstracts from other medical professional society meetings (21%-72.3%). Although the lower publication rate of Innovative Curriculum abstracts unique to the SEA meeting largely explains this shortfall, a relatively low publication rate, even for the Research abstracts, signals opportunities for growth.

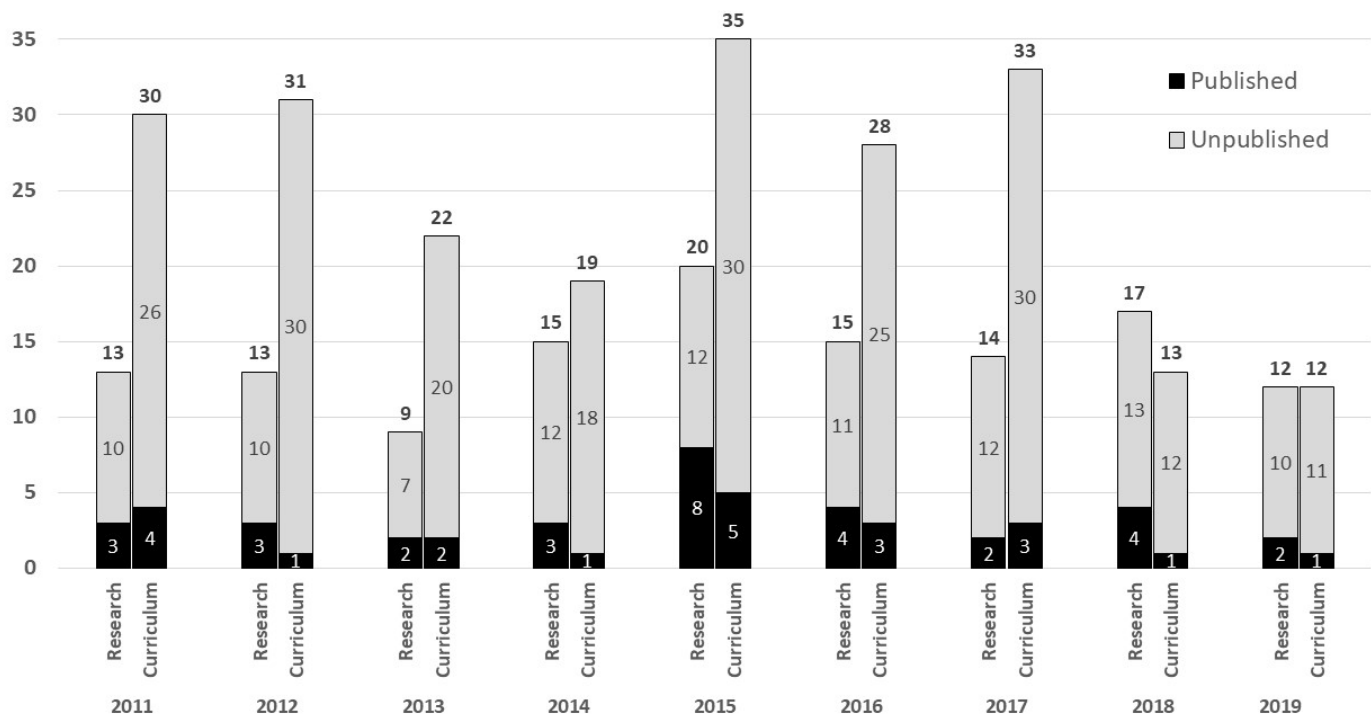
Keywords: Medical education, medical societies, abstracts, meeting abstract, publishing, unpublished work

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Figure

Figure 1. Number of abstracts, by category with or without publication, presented at Society for Education in Anesthesia meetings from 2011-2019.



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Tables

Table 1. PubMed-indexed articles corresponding to the abstracts presented at SEA annual spring meetings

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Abbreviation: SEA, Society for Education in Anesthesia.

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Table 2. Journals publishing articles presented as Curriculum and Research abstracts at SEA meetings from 2011-2019

Journal	Total Published Abstracts = 52	Curriculum Abstracts Published = 21	Research Abstracts Published = 31
<i>Journal of Education in Perioperative Medicine</i>	17 (33) ^a	10 (48)	7 (23)
<i>Anesthesia & Analgesia</i>	5 (10)	0	5 (16)
<i>Journal of Clinical Anesthesia</i>	5	1 (5)	4 (13)
<i>British Journal of Anesthesia</i>	3 (6)	0	3 (10)
<i>Regional Anesthesia and Pain Medicine</i>	3	1	2 (7)
<i>A&A Case Reports</i>	2 (3)	0	2
<i>Journal of Cardiothoracic and Vascular Anesthesia</i>	2	2 (10)	0
<i>Journal of Graduate Medical Education</i>	2	1	1 (3)
<i>Joint Commission Journal on Quality and Patient Safety</i>	2	1	1
<i>A&A Practice</i>	1	0	1
<i>Anesthesiology</i>	1	0	1
<i>BMC Anesthesiology</i>	1	1	0
<i>BMC Medical Education</i>	1	1	0
<i>Clinical Teacher</i>	1	0	1
<i>International Anesthesiology Clinics</i>	1	1	0
<i>Medical Teacher</i>	1	0	1
<i>Pediatric Anesthesia</i>	1	0	1
<i>The Permanente Journal</i>	1	1	0
<i>Simulation in Health Care</i>	1	0	1
<i>Studies Health Technology and Informatics</i>	1	1	0

Abbreviation: SEA, Society for Education in Anesthesia.

^a Parentheses indicate percentage, rounded off to one decimal place.