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New Online Tools Provide Best Practices in Surgical Care for Older Adults

Developed by a multi-specialty editorial board brought together by the American Board of Medical Specialties, the American Geriatrics Society, and funded by The John A. Hartford Foundation, new virtual patient cases include a host of critical issues for older adults facing surgery, from medication management to end-of-life care planning

First of their kind #geriatrics virtual patient cases for Surgical and Related Medical Sub-Specialties from @ABMSCert @AmerGeriatrics @JohnAHartford put best practices for surgical care in hands of health professionals who will care for us all as we age <https://geriatricscareonline.org/ProductAbstract/AGS-Geriatrics-Virtual-Patient-Cases/V001>

CHICAGO – September 17, 2018 – The American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS), the American Geriatrics Society (AGS), with funding from The John A. Hartford Foundation, today unveiled one of the field’s first suites of online tools to aid surgeons and related medical sub-specialists who care for older people. With the number of older adults undergoing surgery increasing faster than the rate of the population aging itself,¹ the new series of nine AGS’ Geriatrics Virtual Patient Cases (VPCs) for Surgical and Related Medical Sub-Specialties are geared toward helping the entire healthcare system better understand and respond to the unique care needs of older adults.

“To advance the care we all want as we age, we need to work together to ensure *all* healthcare professionals have a basic understanding of geriatrics principles,” said Thomas Robinson, MD, one of the three leads for the multi-specialty editorial board responsible for the development of the VPCs. “This new set of online tools reflects the partnerships we need to spread learning and transform care.”

The VPCs will be available for free through 2020 to the first 1,000 subscribers at GeriatricsCareOnline.org. The Geriatrics VPCs focus on aspects of surgical care unique to older individuals, a growing patient population for all healthcare professionals, including those without formal geriatrics training. Both continuing medical education and [Member Boards’ Maintenance of Certification \(MOC\) credit are available](#) to those who successfully complete each VPC.

The nine interactive multimedia clinical scenarios explore key challenges and opportunities that health professionals may encounter when working to improve care for older people facing surgery—from the proper management of medications to issues surrounding surgical delirium and the need to document end-of-life care

¹ Baquero, G.A., & Rich, M.W. (2015). Perioperative care in older adults. *Journal of Geriatric Cardiology*, 12(5), 465-469. doi:10.11909/j.issn.1671-5411.2015.05.018

preferences and expectations. The VPCs were developed by a diverse group of content experts that included medical specialists from general surgery, urology, ophthalmology, orthopaedics, geriatrics, anesthesiology and emergency medicine.

“In addition to presenting realistic clinical tasks, the Geriatrics VPCs for Surgical and Related Medical Sub-Specialties also offer learners real-time feedback on their choices, alternative solutions, and more,” noted Andrew Lee, MD, another co-lead editor for the project. “Opportunities for using the cases to fulfill MOC requirements also are helping to embed tools like these patient cases—and hence geriatrics expertise— more broadly within the framework of how our health professionals sustain ongoing education.”

“Addressing the unique health care requirements in this rapidly growing patient population is an important and evolving public health need,” stated Richard E. Hawkins, MD, ABMS President and Chief Executive Officer. “ABMS is pleased to be a partner in developing these educational tools and offering MOC credit to engage Board Certified physicians in learning about the specific needs of geriatric surgical patients.”

Co-lead editor Myron Miller, MD, AGSF added: “Proactive health systems know that healthcare’s future requires bold approaches that value older adults, address their unique needs, and provide the best care and support possible. Assistance from The John A. Hartford Foundation has enabled diverse partners, such as ABMS and AGS, to ensure that geriatrics expertise can move and grow with us across the continuum of our care.”

For more information or assistance establishing an account on GeriatricsCareOnline.org, contact GCOinfo@americangeriatrics.org.

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About the American Board of Medical Specialties

Established in 1933, the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) is the leading not-for-profit organization overseeing physician certification in the United States. ABMS establishes the standards its 24 Member Boards use to develop and implement educational and professional evaluation, assessment, and certification of physician specialists. More than 880,000 physicians are certified in one or more of the approved 39 specialties and 86 subspecialties offered by the [ABMS Member Boards](#). For more information about ABMS, visit abms.org or call (312) 436-2600.

About the American Geriatrics Society

Founded in 1942, the American Geriatrics Society (AGS) is a nationwide, not-for-profit society of geriatrics healthcare professionals that has—for more than 75 years—worked to improve the health, independence, and quality of life of older people. Its nearly 6,000 members include geriatricians, geriatric nurses, social workers, family practitioners, physician assistants, pharmacists, and internists. The Society provides leadership to healthcare professionals, policymakers, and the public by implementing and advocating for programs in patient care, research, professional and public education, and public policy. For more information, visit AmericanGeriatrics.org.

About The John A. Hartford Foundation

The John A. Hartford Foundation, based in New York City, is a private, nonpartisan, national philanthropy dedicated to improving the care of older adults. For more than three decades, the organization has been the leader in building a field of experts in aging and testing and replicating innovative approaches to care. The

Foundation has three areas of emphasis: creating age-friendly health systems, supporting family caregivers, and improving serious illness and end-of-life care. Working with its grantees, the Foundation strives to change the status quo and create a society where older adults can continue their vital contributions. For more information, visit johnhartford.org and follow [@johnhartford](https://twitter.com/johnhartford).