
Selected Readings in General Surgery:

An interview with Editor-in-Chief Lewis Flint, MD, FACS

by Stephen J. Regnier

In November 2007, the American College of Surgeons Division of Education began publishing *Selected Readings in General Surgery*, which had been published for 30 years at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas. This monthly publication provides readers with a topic overview, enhanced with informed opinion and critique, and full-text reprints of the most valuable content.

The American Board of Surgery lists *SRGS* as a CME resource for surgeons enrolled in its Maintenance of Certification (MOC) program. Successful completion of the *SRGS* continuing medical education (CME) program fulfills MOC Part II requirements that focus on continued learning and self-assessment.

Lewis Flint, MD, FACS, serves as Editor-in-Chief of *SRGS*. Dr. Flint is an adjunct professor of surgery at the Feinberg School of Medicine, Northwestern University, Chicago, IL. In the following interview, Dr. Flint explains the literature review process and brings readers up to date regarding the latest enhancements to this unique resource for surgeons.

What is the process through



Dr. Flint at the SGRS booth during the 2010 Clinical Congress.

which articles are selected for each issue?

Dr. Flint: With the assistance of a well-known expert in the field to be covered, I select 150 to 200 pertinent articles for each issue. Great care is taken to ensure that we use experts who are currently practicing in the given area to evaluate the articles.

After each article is reviewed, an overview that places the content of these articles in the perspective of the best day-to-day

clinical practice is composed. In addition to an overview, 12 to 18 full-text articles are reprinted in each issue. A self-assessment quiz that offers readers the opportunity to earn CME credit is also published in each issue.

Since becoming a publication of the College, how has *SRGS* changed and evolved?

SRGS has grown from a publication produced by a single institution into one that is

international in scope. The publication cycle has been condensed to two-and-a-half years and it now emphasizes practical applications, advances in basic sciences, and viewpoints from specialists, including internal medicine and pediatrics.

In addition, recognizing that the field of general surgery has become diverse and many new fields of interest have emerged, *SRGS* has appointed an international Editorial Board of leading surgeons to provide editorial oversight (see sidebar, this page).

We accentuate and emphasize accessibility and relevance in making the literature more manageable for the practicing surgeon. *SRGS* is now published in print, online, and CD-ROM formats, and reviews the entire specialty of general surgery.

What makes *SRGS* a unique resource for surgeons?

We provide a different, non-textbook approach to learning. Our intent is to analyze relevant medical literature in such a way as to give the surgeon the knowledge necessary to practice state-of-the-art surgery. *SRGS* is unique because the overview and selected full-text articles provide the reader with the most valuable and pertinent content illuminated with informed opinion and critique. Unnecessary and extraneous information is eliminated.

How has the online version of *SRGS* progressed?

In April of last year, we introduced a new online feature

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of the publication called *SRGS Connect*. It is completely Web-based and includes additional content you cannot find anywhere else.

SRGS Connect offers the literature review in both HTML and PDF formats. A keyword searchable, authoritative literature review and analysis is available, providing an up-to-date overview. A new general surgery topic is posted online every four to six weeks. An e-mail alert lets you know when a new issue has been published.

Other features include *Recommended Reading*, a summary of up to 20 of the most pertinent articles cited in the review; *What You Should Know*, which provides a list of 10 recently published articles that are accompanied by expert editorial commentary by a leading surgeon; and *The Knowledgeable Surgeon*, which offers a lighthearted but pertinent

look at the issues surrounding the current state of health care as seen by Bernard M. Jaffe, MD, FACS, professor of surgery at Tulane University School of Medicine, New Orleans, LA.

SRGS Connect also offers a CME program that is exceptional. Easy to use, the online test is linked to a transcript where the user may track CME credits and download certificates. Participation in the CME program can be used to fulfill the American Board of Surgery's MOC Part II requirements.

In developing *SRGS Connect*, we took into consideration feedback from program directors, who indicated they wanted a more affordable and useful way of giving residents access to the most current information, including operative techniques and approaches published by the most experienced clinicians in any given area.

This past year, *SRGS* has explored such diverse topics as ethics, patient safety, general oncology, palliative care, business aspects of surgical practice, and pediatric surgery. What are some of the topics you will be exploring in forthcoming editions of *SRGS*?

We are working on a special theme issue regarding rural surgery issues for the general surgeon. We hope to have that ready at some point this year. Topics slated for 2011 include biliary tract and pancreas; small bowel obstruction and small bowel disease; endocrine surgery; and appendix, colon, rectum, and anus. Topics to be covered in 2012 include spleen, liver disease, vascular (aneurysms, obstructive diseases, and trauma/venous disease), and renal disease.

Where do you see *SRGS* in three years?

We hope to be able to offer *Selected Readings* to surgeons practicing outside the U.S. Another initiative that we hope will begin in the 2011–2012 time period includes a subscription format for e-readers such as the Kindle and the iPad. Some of our readers have asked us for podcasts and/or weblog posts so that reader comments can be posted. We are investigating this avenue as well.

Mr. Regnier is Editor of the Bulletin of the American College of Surgeons, Division of Integrated Communications, Chicago, IL.

Trauma meetings calendar

The following continuing medical education courses in trauma are cosponsored by the American College of Surgeons Committee on Trauma and Regional Committees:

- **Medical Disaster Response**, April 10, 2011, Las Vegas, NV
- **Trauma, Critical Care, and Acute Care Surgery 2011**, April 11–13, 2011, Las Vegas, NV
- **Point/ Counterpoint**,

National Harbor, MD, June 13–15, 2011

- **Advances in Trauma**, Kansas City, MO, December 9–10, 2011

Complete course information can be viewed online (as it becomes available) through the American College of Surgeons' website at <http://www.facs.org/trauma/cme/traumtgs.html>, or contact the Trauma Office at 312-202-5342.