

## 4 expert tips on conducting research as a resident physician

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Conducting research as a resident physician can be a rewarding endeavor, but the process for getting from ideation to completion can be a tricky one.

John Andrews, MD, is the AMA's vice president for graduate medical education (GME) innovations and one of the leaders of the AMA Reimagining Residency initiative. He has worked with residents for several decades, including experience as the director of a pediatric residency program. Dr. Andrews offered his perspective on how residents can successfully pursue research during their graduate medical training.

For residents looking to showcase completed research, the deadline for abstract submissions for the 2022 AMA Research Challenge—the largest national, multispecialty research event for medical students, residents, fellows and international medical graduates—is July 12. Laurel Road is sponsoring the grand prize of \$10,000 for the winner of the AMA Research Challenge.

### Follow your passions

Dr. Andrews said good research begins with curiosity and passion.

“Some people have native curiosity about the work they are doing and find themselves during med school and residency training asking why things are done the way they are and considering improvements to the care they're providing,” he said. “To be raising those questions in an environment where you have an opportunity to answer them can be really exciting and gratifying. The first time you critically examine some aspect of a care process—whether it's procedurally based or office-based—can be pretty exciting.”

Learn about the winning projects from the 2020 and 2021 AMA Research Challenge events.

## Familiar topics will resonate

Looking at the 2021 AMA Research Challenge for context, the one resident-submitted project among the finalists dealt with medical students' socioeconomic status. Dr. Andrews said residents can draw from their own learning environments to find topics that will create rich research projects.

“As soon as you engage in research because you have an interest in answering questions that others are posing—or that you think other people will be interested in—I think your connection to it is a little more tenuous,” he said.

“They may see a lot of things about residency selection or scheduling or the training environment or assessment or a lot of things that are a part of being a resident,” Dr. Andrews added. Residents “have a different perspective” on such topics “perhaps than their faculty mentors or people who are administratively responsible for those processes.”

Learn about the four things judges look for in medical poster presentations.

## Don't be shy about presenting

The research you do in residency may not get published in *JAMA*, but there are still plenty of forums to showcase your work. In addition to the AMA Research Challenge, Dr. Andrews recommended presenting with specialty societies.

“To make brief oral presentations or poster presentations at regional or national meetings is the best way to start, because often the mentors who are helping them with the research are a part of those meetings to begin with,” Dr. Andrews said.

Held virtually, the AMA Research Challenge event gives medical students, physicians and anyone else interested an opportunity to view research posters and presentations and network with other students, residents, fellows and international medical graduates interested in similar research.

Learn about three ways that that virtual medical research competitions benefit entrants.

## Make a plan

Residents are busy, but if you do hope to conduct research during residency, you need to communicate that to your program director.

“All residencies offer some flexibility in the curriculum, typically around the use of elective weeks or months, and I think to make good use of elective time to pursue a research interest is a fine idea,” Dr. Andrews said. “In consultation with their program director or other mentors within their program, they should be looking at schedules for an upcoming year of residency training to openly state that they have an interest in doing some research and to try to build a plan.”