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## **Simulated Surgical ‘Boot Camp’ Aims to Train Residents, Benefit Patients**

### ***Cardiothoracic residents receive intensive 3-day surgical and crisis training***

CHICAGO—With current restrictions on medical resident work hours limiting time available for training and increasing focus on patient safety, the Thoracic Surgery Directors Association (TSDA) is providing structured technical skills and crisis management training outside of the operating room with a simulation-based “Boot Camp” for cardiothoracic (CT) surgical residents.

The intensive, 3-day course, to be held July 25-28 at The William and Ida Friday Center for Continuing Education in Chapel Hill, N.C., will teach and assess residents’ skills in CT surgical procedures and management of rare catastrophic events to better prepare residents for situations they will face inside the operating room, ultimately leading to improved patient outcomes.

Boot Camp Program Directors James I. Fann, MD, from Stanford University, Richard H. Feins, MD, from the University of North Carolina, and George L. Hicks Jr., MD, from the University of Rochester, developed the annual course in 2008 based on identified needs emerging in CT surgery residency programs.

Now in its sixth year, Boot Camp has been met with enthusiasm and a positive response from those attending. Including this year’s program in July, Boot Camp will have trained nearly 200 residents and over 110 faculty members from residency programs in the United States and has assisted in the development of numerous effective simulators and educational methods.

Participating residents benefit from extensive one-on-one training with the faculty and from the use of simulators for performing both cardiac and thoracic surgical procedures. The simulation-based exercises provide experience and hands-on practice in basic and advanced CT procedural skills.

“Increased time constraints placed on residents is just one piece of the puzzle we are trying to address with this Boot Camp,” said Dr. Fann. “Our simulation-based training for both cardiac and thoracic procedures provides experience and practice in CT surgical skills along with crisis management, enabling residents to understand the need for focused practice and be better prepared in the clinical setting. In order to sustain the effort of Boot Camp, identifying the faculty point person at each institution is a main directive to introduce simulation-based learning and enhance its adoption locally.”

During the program, first-year cardiothoracic surgery residents receive instruction in five specific CT surgical areas: cardiopulmonary bypass, coronary artery anastomosis, open lobectomy, bronchoscopy/mediastinoscopy, and aortic valve surgery. The Boot Camp utilizes faculty surgeons, who monitor individual residents at every skills station and provide formative feedback following the simulation exercises.

Faculty members also assess residents in the management of emergency case scenarios and crisis management during cardiopulmonary bypass and pulmonary resection, emphasizing the need for developing crisis management checklists, which recent research has suggested have the potential to improve surgical care and patient safety.

This structured, simulation-based learning initiated at the Boot Camp has led to the development of a cardiac surgery simulation study, under the sponsorship of the Agency for Healthcare Research & Quality.

“This study expands the use of simulation training to include management of multiple intraoperative crises that are rarely to never encountered by residents during training, but are crises that all trainees need to know how to manage,” noted Dr. Feins. “Further, the efforts of the Boot Camp and the study are to better define methods of practice, so that the residents and surgical educators can employ deliberate practice in CT surgery training.”

“The operating room may no longer be the most ideal location for early surgical training due to ethical concerns, time constraints, and changes in resident work hours,” stated Dr. Hicks. “The TSDA Boot Camp aims to help residents learn the importance of recognizing surgical patterns and the reaction to those patterns, network with residents and top educators from across the country, and improve the overall operating room experience in the limited time residents have available, which we hope will translate to better patient safety and outcomes in the OR.”

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For more information on the TSDA Boot Camp or other TSDA activities, contact Beth Winer, Executive Director, at [bwiner@tsda.org](mailto:bwiner@tsda.org) or 312-202-5855.

**About the Thoracic Surgery Directors Association**

The Thoracic Surgery Directors Association (TSDA) was established in 1978 as a membership organization for cardiothoracic surgery residency program directors. TSDA provides resources and networking opportunities for program directors and program coordinators, and supplemental curriculum materials and resources for general surgery and cardiothoracic surgery residents.