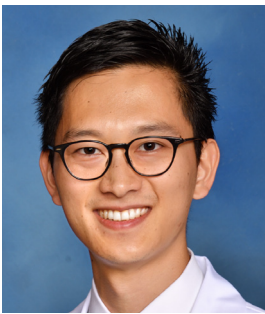




Dr. Kento Sonoda Reflects on a Rewarding Experience as an ABFM Visiting Scholar



Kento Sonoda, MD

The American Board of Family Medicine's (ABFM's) Visiting Scholars Program has provided dozens of family physicians, residents, and medical students the opportunity to collaborate with the ABFM Research Department on original projects that align with their own research interests.

Dr. Kento Sonoda, a practicing physician and assistant professor at

Saint Louis University's Department of Family and Community Medicine, is a recent participant of the ABFM Visiting Scholars Program. His work in the program led to completion of two separate research projects, including one which culminated in an article being published in the Journal of the American Board of Family Medicine (JABFM) in December 2022.

Entitled "[Pandemic Disruption in Residency Did Not Alter Trends in Intended Scope of Practice](#)," this study demonstrated that residency programs successfully adjusted their curricula to ensure that resident training on a broad number of clinical services and procedures remained intact despite the challenges of the pandemic.

"Our paper's message was that residency programs did pretty well in catering their trainings to ensure scope of practice was maintained. Various trainings and procedures were altered successfully so that trainees felt comfortable as they prepared to graduate from residency," said Dr. Sonoda.

Earlier in 2022, Dr. Sonoda's first research project drew national attention via a published article in Family Medicine titled, "[HIV Care by Early-Career Family Physicians](#)."

This study examined the practice environments of physicians who provided HIV care to patients between 2016 and 2019. Dr. Sonoda used ABFM's data archives to learn the number of physicians across the country who are trained during residency to provide treatment for HIV. This is an area of specific interest to Dr. Sonoda because it affects his patient population as well.

"I see patients with HIV and substance use disorder on a regular basis," said Dr. Sonoda, who practices at both a primary care clinic and an addiction-based care center in St. Louis. "The more family physicians who can provide integrated care including behavioral health, addiction and HIV treatment, the better off these patients will be."

Dr. Lars Peterson, ABFM's Senior Physician Scientist, leads the Visiting Scholars Program. He and the rest of the ABFM Research Department assist scholars in shaping their findings into a succinct article.

"We want scholars to work on projects that are meaningful to them," Dr. Peterson explained. "In discussions with Kento, we quickly focused in on his interest in HIV care. The National Graduate Survey we use collects data on preparation and practice of HIV care. Studying what personal, practice, and community characteristics are associated with providing HIV care was a natural fit for his project."

The medical community took note of Dr. Sonoda's work. The article was selected by the Society of Teachers of Family Medicine (STFM) as an honorable mention (top 3) in their Research Paper of the Year competition. He and the paper's other contributors (Dr. Peterson and Zachary Morgan, MS) will be recognized at the STFM Annual Spring Conference on Sunday, April 30.

For Dr. Sonoda, the program has been mentally and professionally rewarding. "Once I learned about the ABFM Research Team, how they worked and what data they could access, I knew I wanted to work with them," Dr. Sonoda explained. "Lars and his team helped me convey a message to readers. It was an amazing experience and a very smooth process."

ABFM's Visiting Scholars Program is a unique opportunity for research-minded physicians, residents, and medical students to collaborate with trained ABFM staff and discover new trends and datapoints related to family medicine. To read more about the program, visit the ABFM website.

