

Resolving Not to Make New Year's Resolutions

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Recently, a colleague and I aimed to discuss something other than the surge in the number of COVID-19 cases that have affected the country. Advanced practitioners (APs) across the nation are facing unpredictable and stressful situations such as critically short staffing and decision-making challenges that surround patient safety. These concerns have reemerged as the number of patients and health-care providers diagnosed with COVID-19 continues to climb. My colleague and I discussed how we long for the day when we can enjoy even a brief pause in the seemingly unrelenting chaos.

Nevertheless, for now, we opted to change our focus and clear our minds with a brisk 10-minute walk before the beginning of our shift. To start the conversation, my colleague asked, “So, what are your New Year’s resolutions?” I found it interesting the way the question was posed, since it was worded assuming I not only planned to make a resolution to change certain habits, but also that I had more than one resolution. Many APs and health-care providers resolve each year to lose weight, exercise more, or drink less (caffeine or “other”). Most years I also resolve to do more research and volunteerism. Each year, I become frustrated by March or so that I have not achieved

all of my goals. Therefore, this year, I was not planning on making any resolutions, so I was not sure how to answer. I knew that my colleague simply wanted to know what my priorities for improving myself were, yet this question had my pre-coffee head spinning.

I have often wondered why so much emphasis is placed on improving ourselves in the new calendar year. Shouldn’t we strive to maintain healthy habits and be the best versions of ourselves throughout the year? What are the barriers to achieving and maintaining goals over the course of the year, and why do those of us who live a generally healthy lifestyle with good diet and exercise (most days) think we are not “healthy” enough? Perhaps we are drawn to the optimism of a clean slate, which drives the resolution to be “better” people and second-guess the choices we make throughout the year.

Rather than seek another failed attempt to fix my flaws through resolutions as in previous years, I have a new goal. I have concluded that, until we are able to focus on anything other than the current challenges many APs face, I resolve to have no resolutions. I will begin this year with introspection and consider how I can become a better, kinder, and healthier version of myself throughout the

year and refuse to force myself to outline resolutions that are likely to fail. I will not formally declare a resolution to exercise more or lose weight because, frankly, as we embark on the second year of this seemingly never-ending crisis, we are all just trying to get along.

With grace, I will embrace the brief but brisk walk at the beginning of my shift with a friend, savor a fresh cup of coffee that someone else made for me, and cherish each of the friendships I share with dear colleagues around the world who face similar challenges both personally and professionally.

IN THIS ISSUE

With that said, I would now like to shift the focus to some highly relevant topics of interest. In Research & Scholarship, we have two excellent papers for you to read. Stein and colleagues discuss the results of a mixed-methods study of general and unique communication skills challenges for APs. In addition, Brant and colleagues highlight the use of

shared decision-making in managing breakthrough cancer pain in patients with advanced cancer. In two Review articles, you will learn about emerging treatment options for advanced or recurrent endometrial cancer and gastrointestinal graft-vs.-host disease in the allogeneic stem cell transplantation population. Byar and Fredericks provide our Grand Rounds feature on uterine leiomyosarcoma, a rare but treatable cancer. This issue's Prescriber's Corner focuses on the drug belantamab mafodotin, approved for use in relapsed and refractory multiple myeloma, presented by Ketchum and colleagues. Finally, in our first Diagnostic Snapshot of 2022, Jang and Jang ask about the cause of arm swelling in a patient with non-Hodgkin lymphoma complicated by superior vena cava syndrome and multiple venous thromboemboli.

As always, thank you for your readership and continued support of this journal. Along with the staff and associate editors at JADPRO, I wish you a happy and healthy 2022! ●