Prolonged Field Care for the Summer 2017 Edition

Sean Keenan, MD

As I write this, we're gearing up for another great SOMSA meeting. By the time you're reading this, hopefully you were able to partake in the many prolonged field care (PFC) offerings in Charlotte, NC.

This past quarter has seen the continued partnering with the Joint Trauma System to produce a steady stream of prehospital PFC Clinical Practice Guidelines (CPGs). We believe these will be one of our truly lasting contributions to austere medicine as we leverage the considerable expertise of the Department of Defense's trauma management specialists to provide guidance to particularly challenging trauma and medical scenarios in the harshest environments. These CPGs, we believe, will provide the basis for education and protocol development at our Special Operations Forces (SOF) schoolhouses.

The telemedicine initiatives started by our working subgroup have informed the larger audiences and provided a test bed for both procedures and technology. Focused on the delivery of accurate and actionable medical communications, we have developed best practices and TTPs to directly enhance the delivery of PFC medical care.

We have also seen the emergence of the larger Department of Defense initiatives with the development of "Prolonged Care" by the Army Medical Department and the refinement of "Forward Resuscitative Care" at the Department of Health Affairs/Joint Staff levels. Both seek to characterize the provision of care in dispersed and austere environments in the context of conventional medical systems. Also, with these definitions, PFC remains distinct as the SOF solution, thereby allowing us to innovate and push forward without being co-opted into conventional doctrine. I personally see this as a distinct advantage to our current position as the thought leaders in this unconventional medical problem set.

Last, I want to announce the role of coordinator of the PFC Working Group (WG), which I have held since its inception in December 2013, has been turned over to LTC Jamie Riesberg, MD. Jamie and I have worked together as fellow SOF docs and members of the PFC WG steering committee for the past 3 years. Jamie will be assuming the role of group surgeon this summer, and, as such, will continue to be in direct role of medical director of SOF. I will continue to serve on the steering committee and as the editor of the JSOM PFC section, but it's time to leave the overall coordination of the WG in the capable hands of a colleague who will continue to have the proximity and responsibility of working with SOF Medics every day. We owe that them.

The WG wishes you a fantastic summer wherever you find yourself, and for those in harm's way or otherwise deployed, stay safe and remain vigilant.

Cheers! Sean

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