



# OUTCOMES JOURNAL

Western Slope Study Group, Inc. (A nonprofit organization)

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## Why Outcomes?

*The following was excerpted from a monograph published by the Maine Medical Assessment Foundation. MMAF. Dr. Robert Keller, founder and former Executive Director.*

*Health care in the United States consumes over 14% of the Gross National Product and annual expenditures have passed the trillion-dollar level. Whether as policy makers, payers, providers, or patients, we all have a stake in the cost-effectiveness and quality of the health care “products” that are purchased with that money. Unfortunately, in the case of health care, we generally do not have the information we need to judge the value of what we are purchasing, In fact, in many cases providers cannot tell us with any certainty the relative merits of the services they are providing (selling) – that is the wide range of medical services that are provided to patients. Much of the medical care that is utilized in this country is of uncertain effectiveness, and the costs that are attached to over-utilized and ineffective care are enormous.*

*It is with these shared concerns that the Western Slope Study Group, Inc. was established here in Grand Junction in 1996. We offer this first edition of the Outcomes Journal to all concerned with our endeavors, particularly our members and immediate supporters, as a vehicle through which we hope to inform and guide those interested in exploring the possibilities of guiding healthcare into better ways of caring for the most important aspect of the industry– The Patients!*



Happy New Year!

## Vision for WSSG

Taken from a document authored by Cathy Welty, MPH, PT, Clinical Director of WSSG and available in its entirety by request

### Vision Statement:

The Vision of the Western Slope Study Group is to enhance, foster, and engender critical thinking in musculoskeletal medicine in a collegial, collaborative, and cooperative fashion so as to promote best practice patterns of patient care through communication, education and enlightenment...



Stay informed. Check

[www.wssgco.com](http://www.wssgco.com)

- Interesting links to the outcomes movement and information regarding best practice.
- WSSG upcoming events including Evidence-Based Practice in the 21st Century! To be held in San Antonio, TX in February 2001!
- Our site is presently undergoing a face lift, but will soon be a clearing house for Outcomes information!
- Watch for Journal Club schedule and articles on the site!

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## City of Grand Junction Supports WSSG.

As some of you know, WSSG took up residence at the corner of 7th and Wellington in a wonderful building, formerly the Wellington Eye Care Center, in September of 2000. Some of you, particularly those attending the Journal Club meetings, suffered through the lack of chairs and adequate furnishings for a couple of months.

Those days are over! Thanks to the City of Grand Junction and Susan Hyatt in the Purchasing department, WSSG was offered a generous donation, which we accepted with grateful delight. The donation consisted of what turned out to be enough chairs, desks and other office equipment to completely furnish our facility.



WSSG Building 2356 Nth 7th Street

WSSG would like to take this opportunity to more publicly thank Susan Hyatt and our fine City of Grand Junction for all that you have done for us. No longer will we sit on the floor and use a box to hold up our projectors. Again, thank you Susan!



WSSG staff engrossed in scientific analysis. Wait a minute - I guess Gina just found the on-line gambling site!

## Surveys Measure surgery success Article by: Nancy Lofholm and published in the Denver Post

When physicians are rated on how good a job they are doing, there is one segment of the population that doesn't have much to say about it— their patients.

Patients are commonly queried on matters like whether their office wait was too long or if they received clear instructions from the doctor. But few surveys have been asking patients if they can put their socks on a year after knee replacement surgery or how long they can sit at a desk comfortably years after they get an artificial hip.

Dr. Michael Dohm, A Grand Junction orthopaedic surgeon, is working to change that, not only in a town that serves as a regional medical hub for western Colorado, but across the country.

He is conducting the only private effort to do this kind of "outcome-based" research and standardize the data collection and analysis so it can be used nationwide by all orthopaedic surgeons. "It's kind of daring to actually be assessing patients from their point of view," said Cathy Welty, project manager for the Western Slope Study Group, an organization Dohm started to promote learning among surgeons.

**"It's kind of daring to actually be assessing patients from their point of view."**

**Cathy Welty  
Project manager,  
Western Slope Study Group.**

Dr. Lee Grant, the president of the Colorado Orthopaedic Society, said Dohm is taking an issue of interest among orthopaedic surgeons to a new level.

"If he can get the ball rolling there will be a tremendous amount of information available that will be valuable

to everybody—patients, physicians, insurers, hospitals," Grant said.

For now, Dohm has put a dozen orthopaedic surgeons on the cutting edge with a survey that tracks the progress and satisfaction of every patient who has a hip or a knee replaced.

Patients sit down at touch-screen computers in the doctor's offices to answer survey questions prior to replacement surgery and continue to give input at intervals for years afterward. The survey asks questions about quality of life as well as the mechanics of how hip or knee is functioning.

Working through the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, Dohm hopes the survey will gain acceptance with other orthopaedic surgeons so they will be able to share the data, use it to examine their own work and determine if they are practicing the best medicine possible.

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## Joint Commission Announces 2000 Ernest A. Codman Award Winners

(OAKBROOK TERRACE, Ill. -- September 27, 2000) The Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations today announced this year's organization and individual winners of the fourth annual Ernest A. Codman Award to recognize excellence in the use of outcomes measurement to achieve health care quality improvement. The recipients of the organization awards in the following categories are:

Behavioral Health: Lake Grove at Maple Valley, Wendell, Massachusetts

Home Care: HomeReach, Worthington, Ohio

Hospital: Mission Hospital Regional Medical Center, Mission Viejo, California

Long Term Care: Kings Harbor Multicare Center, Bronx, New York

John W. Williamson, M.D., is the individual award winner, in honor of his leadership role in promoting the use of performance measures to improve health care services.

Named for the physician regarded in health care as the "father of outcomes measurement," the Ernest A. Codman Award was created to showcase the effective use of performance measurement, thereby enhancing knowledge and encouraging the use of performance measurement to improve the quality of health care. The award is available to the eight types of health care organizations accredited by the Joint Commission, in addition to individuals. A panel of national experts in quality measurement and improvement selects recipients of the award. The Joint Commission will formally present the award to the organization and individual winners during its October 4-6 National Conference on Quality and Safety in Health Care in Chicago. "There are limitless opportunities for improvement in health care, however, vision and leadership are essential to the achievement of true progress. We salute the winners of the Codman Award for their commitment to continuous quality improvement that produces measurable benefits for the American public," says Dennis S. O'Leary, M.D., president, Joint Commission.

All Interested in Journal Club, please visit [www.wssgco.com](http://www.wssgco.com) for dates and times!

**WWW.WSSGCO.COM**

Our website has been updated. Check it out!



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**WSSG**

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There is no follow-up to determine if a year or two later a surgery has had lasting benefits.

Dohm said looking at other doctor's outcomes can also help physicians stay current in a medical field where rapid innovations are the norm.

"We're responsible people who just want to act responsibly," Dohm said. They also want to be proactive. Physicians are currently more and more under the measurement microscope with surveys that examine their work. But those surveys, which are often used by insurers, are mainly directed at measuring the economics of care physicians provide—how many tests they order, how many procedures they use, how many prescriptions they write.

Hospitals also do surveys. Those surveys take patient satisfaction into account, but the questions stop a month after as patient leaves the hospital. There is no follow-up to determine if a year or two later a surgery has had

lasting benefits.

Dohm has enlisted the help of two Grand Junction hospitals to share data for the survey project and is currently working to do the same with the Veterans Administration medical center in Grand Junction and nationwide. The University of Colorado is doing its own outcome-based surveying at its Health Sciences Center.

Kathy Cherin, who directs St. Mary's Hospital quality control program, said the outcome-based survey can be very helpful to hospitals. She said previously she had little available information to track orthopaedic surgeries: If the patient didn't die during the surgery, it was deemed a success.

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Mike Dohm on x-mas vacation

Western Slope Study Group, Inc. (A  
nonprofit organization)

2356 North 7th Street, Grand Junction, Co. 81501

Phone: 970-243-9970

Fax: 970-256-0503

Email: estone@gj.net

[www.wssgco.com](http://www.wssgco.com)

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improve quality for our future.

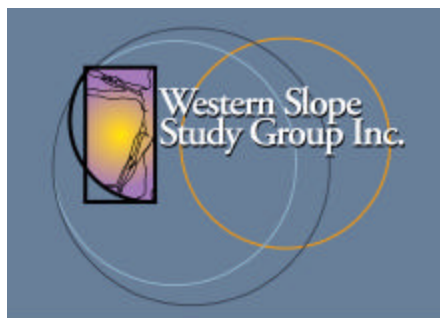
### Surgery Success... continued from page 3

“Overall, it’s looked hunky dory, but we hadn’t been able to look at if they went back to work or what their quality of life is,” Cherin said. She said the orthopaedic surgeon’s surveys also will allow the hospital to assess details like weather it is using the best kind of artificial joints and the best glue. “We are very supportive of this effort,” she said.

Dohm’s efforts have made him a champion to others in the medical field. “He is very forward thinking,” said Karen Bond, president of Cedaron Medical, Inc., the Davis, Calif., company that supplies the software for the surveys. “It’s unusual for the size of community to do this, but there are forward thinkers doing this there who really want to provide quality health care.”

## WSSG sincerely thanks the following supporters and contributors to our cause

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ment Foundation



*As this is our first edition, we invite all feedback and suggestions for future articles. We are of course, a non-profit organization and funding for such an endeavor can be shaky at first. Please direct all comments to:*

Paul Harshman at [www.wssgco.com](http://www.wssgco.com).

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To the extent that the Journal can accommodate writing contributions, we whole-heartedly invite them.

All submissions must be typed in MSWORD format and sent by email to:

Paul Harshman, director of public relations and project development, by email located on [www.wssgco.com](http://www.wssgco.com). All submissions must be made by the last day of the month to be considered.