



June 2019

**Academic Emergency Medicine  
Editor-in-Chief Pick of the Month**

**Set by zero**

We live in a metric driven world. The Dow Jones index, internal “360” surveys, Press Ganey, and the bathroom weight scale all influence our thoughts, mood and behavior. This month, for those with lives entrenched in academic emergency medicine, [Boudreaux and colleagues](#) provide a quantitative comparison of the academic output of the brethren of emergency care. Chairs of emergency medicine around the country have yearned for these data for years. The diligence of [Boudreaux et al.](#) have yielded sentinel data that will enable Chairs and Chiefs to look their faculty in the eyes during annual performance reviews and objectively say “Here is where you stand.” Most emergency physicians know the importance of patient satisfaction, charts completed on time and RVUs. But more and more, leaders of academic emergency departments seek to define evidence-based publication goals expected of an Assistant, Associate or Full Professor of Emergency Medicine. These benchmarks help to determine awards such as pay bonuses, power roles, office space, and access to, or perhaps ownership of, The Red Swingline Stapler.

The data do not engender major confidence. The authors found that “over half of instructors and assistant professors had zero publications in the 5-year window,” which forced the authors to create Table 2, which shows the results of faculty who published at least one paper in five years. Observe that if an associate professor publishes more than zero (that means just one, count em’, one) papers in five years, he or she is average or better than the brethren. Moreover, the data do not allow an inference into authorship order; the majority of these publications were probably from individuals with contributing authorship positions, rather than first- or senior-authorship roles.

I hope this POTM compels us to ask: why is the bar so low?

Best wishes,  
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