

Zoom On Profile: Michael A.E. Ramsay



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Dr. Ramsay is Chairman of the Department of Anesthesiology and Pain Management at Baylor University Medical Center in Dallas, Texas, a position that he has held since 1989. He is also Co-Medical Director of Operating Room Services. He serves as a member of the Baylor University Medical Center Board of Trustees and is also a member of the Medical Board. He is Director of Anesthesia for the liver transplant programme and is Past President of the International Liver Transplantation Society. Dr. Ramsay was recently appointed as an at-large delegate to the United Network for Organ Sharing and is a member of the American Society of Anesthesiologists Committee on Transplant Anesthesia. He is also a member of the Board of Directors of The Patient Safety Movement Foundation and serves as the Chair of the "Failure to Rescue: Post-operative Respiratory Depression" workgroup.

What are your key areas of interest and research?

My key areas of interest are: sedation: making it safer. We have a clinical trial nearly finished on new acoustic technology that monitors respiratory rate on sedated patients alerting the caregiver of respiratory depression.

I'm also interested in liver transplantation monitoring hemoglobin noninvasively for bleeding reducing blood transfusions and the associated risks.

What are the major challenges in your field?

Major challenges in my field include avoiding preventable patient harm in our hospitals. The hospital should be the safest place for our patients and yet mistakes and infections occur that should not. It takes leadership from the top down to create the "Culture of Safety" that must exist. No patient should ever be found "dead in bed". Every patient should have a wireless monitor connected by Wi-Fi to the nurse's smartphone. The technology is there. Most people have a watch or small device that monitors them. Now, we need all patients monitored with a small device that can alert the caregiver when they are getting into trouble so an intervention can be made in good time.

What is your top management tip?

My top management tip is to create a culture of safety in your hospitals. Create a non-punitive environment where people can report issues. This promotes accountability.

What would you single out as a career highlight?

My career highlight would be the creation of the Ramsay Sedation Scale which was the first move to make Sedation safer globally.

If you had not chosen this career path what do you think you would have become?

I have always wanted to be a physician - as long as I can remember

What are your personal interests outside of work?

I enjoy travelling and meeting people from different cultures to gain better understanding.

Your favorite quote?

"We can't improve what we do not measure"

Published on : Mon, 3 Dec 2018