"How can I get off on the right foot with respect to conducting research early in my career?"

Marianna Fedorenko, Pharm.D.
PGY2 Infectious Diseases Pharmacy Resident
Barnes-Jewish Hospital, St. Louis, MO

I believe that establishing a clinical practice should be the top priority of clinical pharmacists completing their training and starting their first position. That said, I have observed that individuals who do not get an early start in research and other scholarly activities have difficulty incorporating these activities into their schedule at later time points. I commend you for "thinking ahead" with this question and have some suggestions that may help you in navigating your first independent steps in research:

1. **Join a winning team:** Find out who is doing research that you are passionate about and that is being successful (grants, publications, etc.). Set up a meeting with that individual and discuss how you can get involved.
2. **Get a research mentor:** Find someone you admire who is successful in doing research (you will need their CV), and set up a meeting with him or her to discuss establishing a mentoring relationship.
3. **Start writing every day:** I recommend reviewing the literature in an area in which you WOULD LIKE to become known and submitting your ideas in this area for publication. Make sure it is something that HAS NOT been reviewed recently by others. If you have never written a review, collaborate with someone who has published reviews in the journals you read!
4. **Keep a running list of potential research ideas on an index card in your white coat pocket:** These ideas should be garnered from questions that come up in your practice. When you are able, perform an extensive literature search on the questions to see whether they have already been addressed. If there is doubt or if there are conflicting reports in the literature, it could be a good idea to pursue these areas of research.
5. **Attend scientific meetings and seminars both inside and outside your area:** Finding out what other people are doing can be inspiring and can generate new ideas!
6. **Look for opportunities to improve your skills:** Many professional organizations offer training programs in research and scholarship (ACCP Research and Scholarship Track). Sign up! Keep learning!

If you do all six of these things in the first year of your new position, you will

definitely be on the right track in research!

Susan C. Fagan, Pharm.D., FCCP, BCPS
Distinguished Research Professor
Jowdy Professor/Assistant Dean
University of Georgia College of Pharmacy
Augusta, GA