

Join ASNR, and Bring a Friend! — Dr. Steven R. Zeiler Shares Five Member Benefits for Clinicians

Scientific and professional societies are a standard mechanism for bringing similar-minded academics together. The American Society of Neurorehabilitation (ASNR) has done this in the field of neurorehabilitation for over thirty years and continues to accomplish this task – and it is particularly important to those in clinical medicine.

Common advice is for professionals to join relevant associations for job opportunities, mentoring, professional development, networking, and scholarships. When I was a freshly minted junior faculty member starting at Johns Hopkins University, my mentor encouraged me to join ASNR for these reasons. Indeed, my membership has been worthwhile. Several years later, my career has advanced, and I am now Associate Professor of Neurology at Johns Hopkins and Director of the Vascular Neurology Fellowship Program, and these five benefits of ASNR membership still are still providing value for my career.



1) Connections with neurorehabilitation leaders

First, ASNR provides access to leaders in the field. Science and technology, as well as their application to medicine, change rapidly, and physicians need to keep up with the changes that affect health care. Learning from top neurorehabilitation researchers has helped ensure that I continue provide the best evidence-based care possible for the patients I treat. Additionally, ASNR provides Continuing Medical Education (CME) through their Annual Meetings for ongoing maintenance of professional licensure.

2) Networking

Second, ASNR offers a wide variety of networking opportunities. Each annual meeting includes poster sessions, roundtable discussions, and social events where it is easy to meet and get to know people in the field. Besides connecting with other professionals during Annual Meetings, ASNR offers access to online webinars, chats, and forums to discuss a variety of topics important to me. This network has increased my academic exposure, expanded my peer group, and enhanced my clinical care. Neurology and neurorehabilitation are highly interdisciplinary fields, and it has been tremendously valuable to be exposed to perspectives from a wide variety of professionals through ASNR, including physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech and language pathologists, and other neurologists, as well as researchers spanning academic, industry, and government positions. The connections that I have made with people across the U.S. and around the world have also allowed me to hear how others are handling some of the same issues that I have faced as a physician and scientist.

3) Relevant training and resources for clinicians

Third, ASNR curates targeted products and resources. The Annual Meeting, and the associated peer-reviewed journal [Neurorehabilitation and Neural Repair](#) (NNR) provide access to and information about medications, therapies, and technology that are important to my career and to my clinical practice. For example, NNR recently published [a special issue](#) that focused on novel technology that is being investigated to facilitate recovery after neurological injuries, and it was

fascinating to read about the newest advances on this front and to contribute to the introductory article for this issue. Further, ASNR provides a series of career development webinars each year that include both topics relevant for researchers and also sessions on universal career-related topics, such as work-life balance, that are critically important for clinicians today.

4) Invigorating conversations with experts, peers, and trainees

Perhaps the most important reason I joined ASNR is the thrill of learning new concepts and skills in the presence of others who are also passionate about neurorehabilitation. With all of the challenges we face in healthcare, it is inspiring and uplifting to interact with others who are actively working to improve the quality of life and medical care for patients with a wide variety of neurological conditions, including stroke, multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy, Parkinson's disease, traumatic brain injury, and other neurological conditions. As the field continues to advance and evolve, having a group of people with whom you can discuss hot topics, debate controversies, and learn alongside can enrich your career and make you a better scientist and clinician.

5) Opportunities for leadership and service

Finally, ASNR has offered me a chance to share my experiences. Finding new ways I could contribute within ASNR was a natural progression of my membership. As such, and at this point, I am excited to help ASNR do for others what it has done for me. I have found joy in being available for others, helping others connect, and helping ASNR to grow. As Chair of the Membership Engagement Committee, I have had many opportunities to hear from ASNR members and to help members engage more with the organization and with each other. I am proud of the values that ASNR promulgates: high quality science, diversity, equity and inclusivity (indeed, ASNR values differences in ideas and embraces people with all backgrounds), interdisciplinary interactions, leadership in the field, and education. As such, I strongly encourage others to become more involved with ASNR.

I recommend the same prescription for other like-minded people interested in neurorehabilitation – and especially for physicians: join, attend, find interesting work, network with people, lead, and pass it on.