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*To ensure that an annual conference is planned, developed and produced*

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**Article: “The Benefits and Risks of Being a Standardized Patient: A Narrative Review of the Literature”**

We wish to inform our SP Educator readers of [an article recently published in May 2015 in the journal \*Patient\*](#). “The Benefits and Risks of Being a Standardized Patient: A Narrative Review of the Literature” by authors Joseph Plakson, Joseph Nicholson, Sarita Kundrod, Sondra Zabar, Adina Kalet, and Lisa Altshuler of New York University, provide a thorough summary of 67 studies that reported on benefit/risk outcomes of both SPs and “real patients” (RPs), defined as real patients who teach by sharing their own medical histories and experiences.

Well organized and written, the authors do a great job describing their methods and criteria. In the Discussion section, they include summaries of previous reports of benefits and risks for our SP population as well as recommendations for improving future studies. The conclusion is that SPs value their contributions to healthcare, their collaborations with healthcare providers, and even their improved health behaviors in their personal lives due to active participation in education. However, there are psychological and physical risks to being an SP. One example that struck me was that sometimes there may be psychological trauma if we continually use the same SPs to portray overweight or obese patients. Such considerations are needed to be assessed when taking appropriate care of our SP cadre.

Overall, the article is one that merits our review and we encourage its dissemination to your respective staffs.