“The Tyranny of Distance: Protracted Care in a Resource-Constrained Environment/ Looking for a Way Out”

The world has gotten smaller in many ways. Technology enables speed to supercede geography in communication and marketing, globalizing business and finance.

The application of patient care, particularly in military (or any austere or non-permissive) environments, continues to suffer in a fashion similar to the application of military force itself. Strength diminishes with distance. Kenneth Boulding referred to this phenomenon as the “Loss of Strength Gradient”, and showed reciprocally how the forward projection and staging of assets mitigated the amelioration of strength over distance. Tactical medicine has borrowed from this concept, pushing higher levels of care ever closer to the X. Despite this, crucial work is needed in the arena between stabilization and evacuation—especially when no fixed facility or higher level of care is available.

The Journal of Special Operations Medicine previously published articles addressing select components of prolonged care, which has been and will continue to be an increasingly prevalent issue. Our editorial staff is keenly interested in reviewing drafts and manuscripts furthering the conversation and evidence regarding prolonged and critical evacuation care. Whether tailored or complete, knowledge about resources and innovations in prolonged care in the combat environment is critical to the discussion.

The world will not diminish in size, conflicts will not be less expensive, and hostilities show no sign of abating. Our patients deserve clinicians who use the best emerging evidence to develop and deliver care at all levels.

Special Operations clinicians are the touchstone by which military medicine tests advances in care. Over the past decade-plus, we have pushed the envelope tremendously. Lest we lose the benefit of collective knowledge and our innovations stagnate as untold anecdotes, the professional action is to publish.

Contributors should contact the editor directly with intent at editor@JSOMonline.org.

In the first few years of the JSOM we had a section that was titled There I Was. Now that we are into our 12th year of war there are many stories to be told. We are looking to compile and publish your stories, be they humorous, lessons learned, or an event or patient that left an impact on you. If you prefer to remain anonymous that it up to you. It can be as long or as short as it needs to be to tell your story. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

If you have a story, send it to editor@JSOMonline.org.