OVERVIEW

There is growing awareness that fatigue can have an adverse effect on trainee performance. Symptoms of fatigue and/or stress are normal and expected to occur periodically during fellowship training as well as after, just as it would in other professional settings. In fellowship training, fatigue/impaired performance means possible missed opportunities for learning, and, worst case scenario, potential harm to patients.

The fellowship program utilizes the following for education, detection and addressing excess fatigue:

• Annual computer based learning module “Sleep and Fatigue Education for Clinical Program Trainees”
• Annual Physician Burnout lecture
• Monthly meetings with the program director

Excess fatigue and/or stress may occur in patient care settings as well as non-patient care settings such as lectures and conferences. In patient care settings, patient safety and well-being of the patient mandates implementation of an immediate and proper response sequence. In non-patient care settings, the response may vary based on the severity of and the demeanor of the fellow’s appearance and perceived condition. The following is a general guideline for those recognizing or observing excessive fellow fatigue and/or stress.

PATIENT CARE

Attending Physician

• If the attending physician notices evidence of excessive fatigue and/or stress, the fellow should be released from any further patient care responsibilities at time of recognition.
• The attending should privately discuss his/her opinion with the fellow, attempt to identify the underlying reason for the fatigue, and discuss the amount of rest needed to alleviate the situation.
• The attending must contact the program director to inform them of the situation as well as underlying issue.
• The fellow should rest at the hospital (call room) prior to driving home. In addition, the fellow will be advised that someone may pick him/her up for transportation home. Taxi service is also available at no charge to the fellow.
• The fellow who has been released from further patient care cannot appeal the decision and must have permission to resume work from the supervising attending.

Fellow

• Other fellows who notice a colleague’s fatigue have the professional responsibility to notify the supervising attending without fear of reprisal.
• A fellow who feels fatigued has the professional responsibility to notify the supervising attending or program director without fear of reprisal.

Program Director

• If the removed fellow’s absence results in immediate effect on other fellows (ie. call) this should be accounted for immediately.
• The fellow’s call schedule, duty hours, patient care responsibilities, and personal problems/stressors will be discussed.
• The rotation will be reviewed for potential changes and improvements.
• If the problem is recurrent or not resolved in a timely manner, the fellow may be removed from patient care responsibilities indefinitely. A medical evaluation may be requested as well as a meeting with Physicians well-being.

FELLOWSHIP RESOURCES

• Fellow colleagues
• Program Director (pager 24 hours/day #16586)
• Attending physician
  • House Officer Mental Health Program
  • The current participating attending psychiatrists are: Kate Baker, MD; Karla Blackwood, MD; and Srijan Sen, MD

To schedule an evaluation, simply contact Natalie Dooley, administrative assistant, at (734) 763-4215. Attending Psychiatrists are available to see house officers EXPEDIENTLY for a FREE OF CHARGE and CONFIDENTIAL initial evaluation (insurance is not billed and visit is not documented in MiChart). Visit website.