



Effective Date: June 26, 2010  
Supersedes: June 2018  
Reviewed: July 2020

Section: Medical Education  
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### **Subject: Fatigue Mitigation**

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#### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to educate all trainees and faculty to recognize the signs of fatigue mitigation the trainee's performance and potentially impact patient care negatively. Procedures are established to transfer clinical responsibilities when the trainee's fatigue is a potential risk to the patient or others.

#### **POLICY**

Annually, programs will:

- a) educate all faculty members and residents to recognize the signs of fatigue and sleep deprivation
- b) educate all faculty members and residents in alertness management and fatigue mitigation processes
- c) encourage residents to use fatigue mitigation processes to manage the potential negative effects of fatigue on patient care and learning.

Program Directors (or designee) will present a PowerPoint lecture from the American Academy of Sleep Medicine (or similar lecture) to all trainees. This lecture will include recognizing the signs of fatigue, strategies to manage fatigue when possible, and how to transfer clinical responsibilities. The trainee must monitor oneself for the signs suggestive of fatigue that usually occur after prolonged periods of sleeplessness such as:

1. Sluggish thought patterns, inability to concentrate.
2. Inability to maintain wakeful state in the absence of external stimulation.
3. Irritability, sudden anger, intolerance.
4. Nausea or stomach cramps unassociated with physical illness.
5. Tremors, particularly intention tremors while performing delicate procedures.

#### **PROCEDURE**

The trainee must stop and acquire rest when fatigued. If a trainee is sufficiently fatigued to potentially impair his/her ability to perform, the trainee must:

1. Transfer clinical responsibilities to another trainee or to an attending.
2. If the trainee cannot find another qualified person to assume these responsibilities, the supervising faculty must make arrangements to transfer the responsibilities.
3. The residency Program Director or his/her designee must be notified of this transfer of responsibilities.



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Supervising faculty must assist with the transfer of clinical responsibilities when a trainee has been identified, either by staff, other trainees, or the trainee him/herself as unable to perform and all attempts to transfer responsibilities to other trainees have failed.

The program, in partnership with its Sponsoring Institution, will ensure adequate sleep facilities and safe transportation options for residents who may be too fatigued to safely return home. The program will reimburse the resident for expenses occurred for transportation home.

### **MITIGATION:**

For many residents, the ability to manage fatigue will require lifelong monitoring and needs to become an ingrained skill. Residents should be careful stewards of their time both at work and during relief periods. There is a temptation to force too much into the hours free from program responsibilities. Programs should educate the residents to the following practical strategies and encourage the development of healthy time management and sleep habits.

#### **Resident's need to:**

- Refrain from driving if drowsy.
- Get educated and learn to recognize the signs of fatigue. Do not be embarrassed to discuss these issues openly
- Make sleep a priority; be appropriately selfish about needed sleep time. Excessive fatigue can affect every facet of life.
- Aim for 7-9 hours of sleep per night. This is especially true after a period of sleep loss.
- Keep to routine when possible. Going to bed and rising at the same time may help.
- Get adequate exercise but avoid exercising directly before sleep.
- Protect sleep time. Turn off phone. Ask your family/significant others, friends to help you. Try not to incur a sleep debt from non-work activities.
- Get light exposure when awake.

**The prevention, treatment and management of resident fatigue are a shared responsibility of accrediting bodies, institutions, programs, faculty and residents.**