
Policy Title: Alertness Management/Fatigue Mitigation

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PURPOSE

The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center is committed to promoting patient safety and resident well-being in a supportive educational environment. In compliance with the ACGME requirement for sponsoring institutions to ensure faculty and residents appear for duty appropriately rested and fit for duty (CPR.VI.A.1), this policy provides guidance on methodologies available to educate faculty members and residents:

- To recognize the signs of fatigue and sleep deprivation
- Alertness management and fatigue mitigation processes
- Adopt fatigue mitigation processes to manage the potential negative effects of fatigue on patient care and learning.

DEFINITIONS

Faculty: Any individuals who have received a formal assignment to teach resident/fellow physicians. At some sites appointment to the medical staff of the hospital constitutes appointment to the faculty.

Fatigue management: Recognition by either a resident or supervisor of a level of resident fatigue that may adversely affect patient safety and enactment of a solution to mitigate the fatigue.

Fitness for duty: Mentally and physically able to effectively perform required duties and promote patient safety.

Resident: Any physician in an accredited graduate medical education program, including interns, residents, and fellows.

Scheduled duty periods: Assigned duty within the institution encompassing hours, which may be within the normal work day, beyond the normal work day, or a combination of both.

PROCEDURE

Each program will provide all faculty members and residents' information and instruction on recognizing the signs of fatigue, sleep deprivation, alertness management, fatigue mitigation processes and how to adopt these processes to avoid potential negative effects on patient care and learning. This should be accomplished using visual presentations, lectures, white papers or any other educational resources the program may elect to use.

To ensure patient care is not compromised if a resident or faculty member must apply fatigue mitigation techniques while on scheduled duty, each program will create a documented process to ensure continuity of patient care. UT Southwestern and its programs will ensure adequate sleep facilities are available to residents and/or safe transportation options for residents requesting assistance due to fatigue because of time spent on duty.

All programs will be monitored for compliance through the UT Southwestern GME office review of programs Annual Review meeting minutes or reports, the Internal Review process, and the Annual Survey of Residents.