



EMERGENCY MEDICINE TRAINEES' ASSOCIATION

Rest and Sleep Campaign

Supported by the Royal College of Emergency Medicine

Whilst there may be many times we ask superhuman feats of ourselves and our colleagues, our physiology is mundanely human. We are not evolved to be awake and alert overnight - working at 3 in the morning is not the same as working at 3 in the afternoon. Rapidly cycling rota patterns risk leaving us treating patients in a potentially jet-lagged state, whilst working through those shifts without break makes it impossible to maintain optimal performance and patient care.

It is imperative that staff and employers take the time to understand the consequences of variable shift work on our physical and mental health and our ability to care for patients safely. As individuals we must take responsibility for improving our core sleep, taking our breaks, recognising unsafe fatigue in ourselves and supporting our colleagues to do the same. In return we ask our employers and regulatory bodies to recognise that there cannot be a choice in providing adequate, clean rest and sleep facilities for staff; that we must start making a clear and principled effort to prioritise staff safety and staff wellbeing in order that they can continue to look after patients and themselves.

Our lead campaign poster is designed to provoke a conversation. We want to be clear why this matters, what staff can do and what employers can do to make small and practical changes that build a healthier environment in which we respect the importance of breaks, of rest and of sleep on the health of our workforce and the patients we care for.

Working Together

This campaign was not produced in, and would never have value in, isolation. We are very grateful to our colleagues at RCEM, the AAGBI, RCoA, FICM Fatigue Working Group and Dr Mike Farquhar at Guy's & St Thomas' NHS Trust who are leading by example and have been instrumental in helping to develop the campaign for Emergency Medicine.

We feel it is very important that this is not managed as a specialty-specific conversation; this requires consensus across specialities and staff groups. We support the BMA's Policy and ongoing work on fatigue, are working closely with the Royal College of Emergency Medicine Sustainable Working Practices Committee and look forward to continuing to collaborate with the other Royal Colleges and bodies representing multidisciplinary staff on the subject.

By sharing and supporting this work you are creating critical steps in shaping what is deemed acceptable and unacceptable working practices, redefining the culture around rest, sleep and wellbeing and protecting our colleagues and patients of today and of the future.

The Other Resources To Explore

Please visit: www.emtraineeassociation.co.uk/rest where we have links to the AAGBI Factsheets for further information on the practical steps you can take to improve your sleep, be safer on night shifts, recognise fatigue and the expectations of our employers and Trusts. Our resource page also links to BMA Policy on Fatigue and Sleep Deprivation which, together with the resources from Dr Farquhar, provide some excellent short videos and links to the evidence underpinning much of this work.

"We are not superheroes. Our breaks are there to protect us and our patients"

@EMTACommittee