

Balancing Academic Excellence and Service in a Residency Program

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Who is a resident doctor?

In Nigeria, a resident doctor is a post-NYSC physician who is in a residency program

Residency is a postgraduate training program, which allows the resident to perform as a licensed practitioner and to train under the supervision of Consultant Doctors.

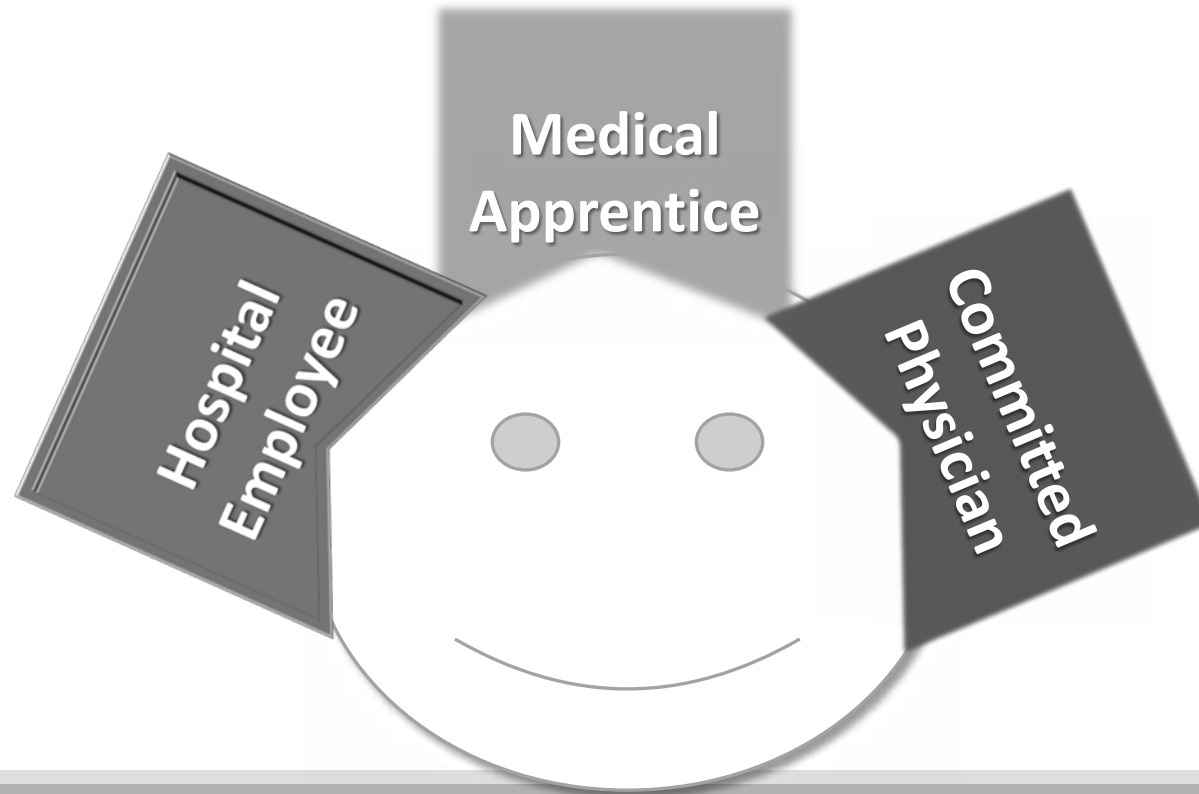
Carried out in tertiary healthcare facilities

Under the auspices of Postgraduate Medical Colleges

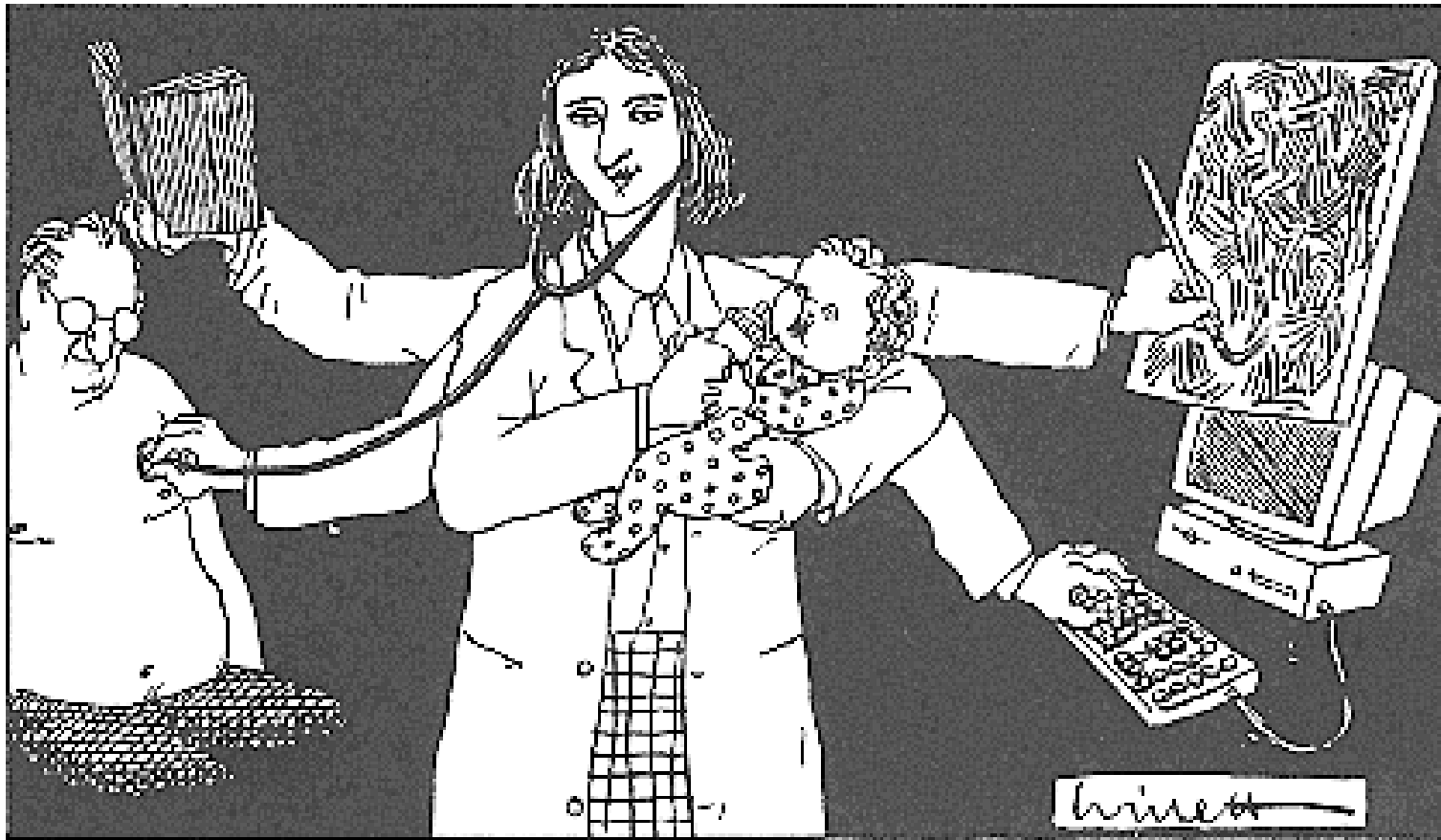


Resident's Responsibilities

Resident doctors simultaneously wear three hats:



Resident's balancing act



As you are entering residency....

What are your professional goals?

Who will you be primarily working with?

What will be your relationship with the ancillary staff?

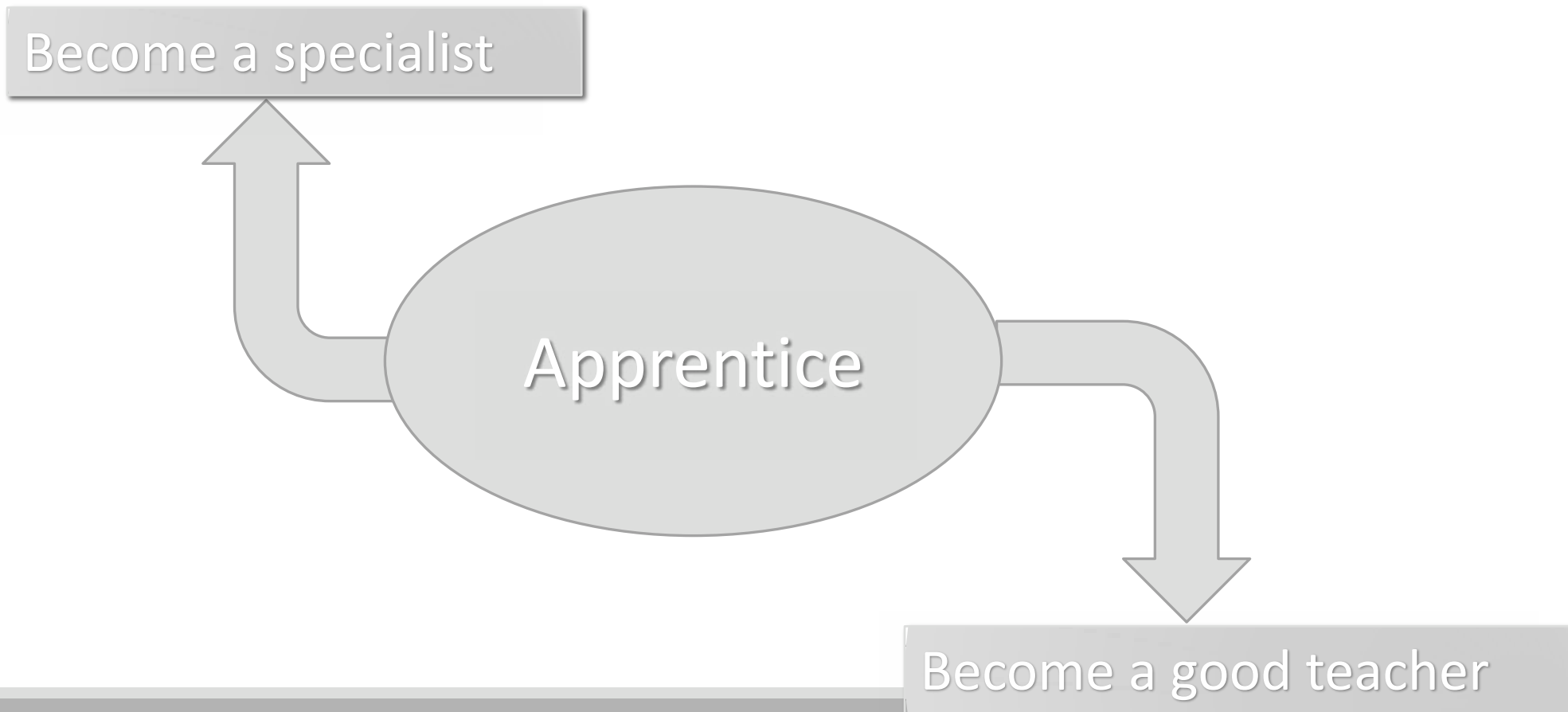
How best to resolve professional conflicts that may arise during training

How will you manage your time?

How will you manage your personal life?



What are the resident's professional goals?



Steps to becoming a specialist

- I. Observe closely the clinical styles of your consultants, to see what best suits your own approach and philosophy of patient care.
- II. Find practitioners as role models who are dedicated and empathetic and practice medicine in a superior manner.
- III. Endeavor to maintain your emotional equilibrium even in the face of the intense pressures and trials that you may likely experience
- IV. Be firmly committed to carrying your share of the workload as a responsible member of the treatment team.
- V. Aim to improve any deficiencies in your interpersonal abilities for dealing with patients, colleagues, and ancillary staff



Steps to becoming a specialist (2)

- VI. Always have the best interests of your patients in mind as your highest priority.
- VII. Strive intently to master essential diagnostic skills by gaining expertise in the art of performing a work-up, to facilitate arriving at a meaningful preliminary diagnosis.
- VIII. Seek to enhance your skills in carrying out the basic routine procedures of your specialty.



Steps to becoming a good teacher

Read, Read and read.

Review each day's activity before you sleep

Strive to master all diagnostic and therapeutic skill in your specialty

Avail yourself of all opportunities to teach others especially medical students and junior residents.

Learn to provide instruction calmly and pleasantly to make learning enjoyable.

Willingly accept constructive comments and suggestions from subordinates



The Team

The Consultant Specialist

Senior Registrars

Junior Registrars

Interns

Medical Students



The Consultant Specialist

- i. Carries the ultimate clinical responsibility for patient management.
- ii. Definitively decides on a treatment option choice
- iii. Determines patient treatment protocols
- iv. Helps to amicably resolve crucial issues which team members face.
- v. Is responsible for supervising training of team members and thus for sharing their knowledge and skills collectively or individually.

The Senior Resident

- i. This may also be the chief resident
- ii. He is in charge of and responsible for the routine daily activities of the entire team
- iii. Have a significant role to play in observing and teaching other members of the team and should be reasonably available for consultation by them.
- iv. Helps resolve any issues that may arise in the course of working with other senior and junior residents and the ancillary staff.
- v. Serves as liaison between consultants, hospital management and other junior members of the team.

The Junior Resident

- i. Is responsible to the Senior Resident but, when necessary, junior residents may report directly to the consultant.
- ii. Should be the first-on-call for the unit
- iii. Must clerk all patients that are admitted to the unit.
- iv. Plays a significant role in the supervision of new interns
- v. Have an obligation of teaching the medical students assigned to the unit.

The Intern

The Intern duties include

- i. Patient work-up
- ii. Routine care decisions
- iii. Arranging for tests or providing treatment based on the unit protocol.

The Other Healthcare Professionals

Nurses

Orderlies

Physiotherapies

Lab Scientists

Radiographers

Record Officers

Administrators

Working with other healthcare professionals

Learn and accept the standard protocol and routines relevant to patient care (e.g., scheduling of tests, writing orders, operation lists etc.).

When in doubt, do not hesitate to ask an experienced ancillary professional for a suggestion or opinion on a subject or technique that he/she has substantial experience with.

Be prepared to admit to errors on your part, explaining that they are a component of a normal resident's learning process.

When it is necessary to rebuke a support staff member for a mistake, first be certain that you are correct. Handle the matter tactfully and aim to educate the individual, not merely to criticize.

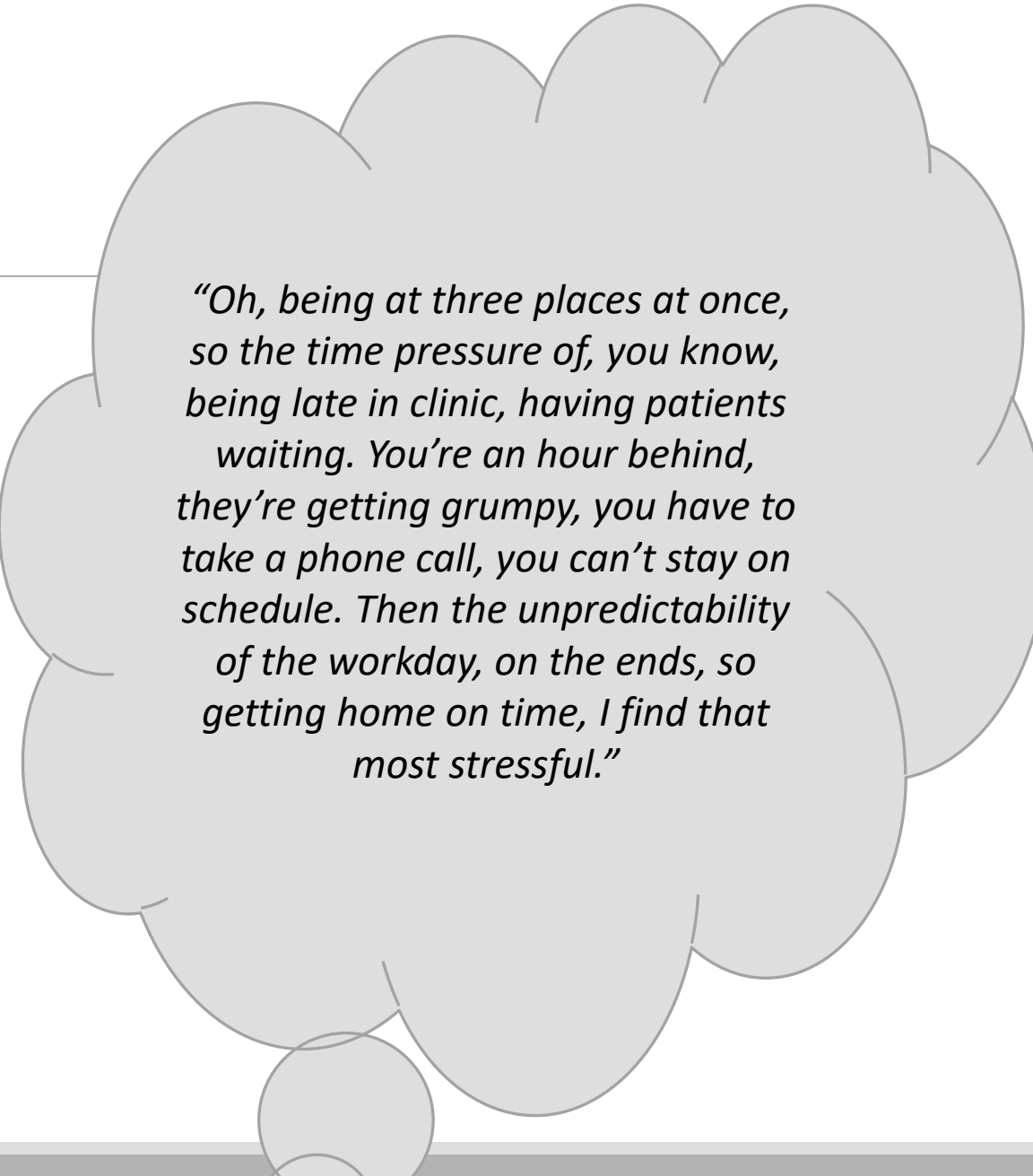
When requesting assistance, be polite, and express your genuine appreciation for any help provided.

Time management

A high priority item

Difficulties in time management arise from

- i. Underestimating the amount of time that scheduled activities will take,
- ii. Scheduling an excessive number of activities to the point of becoming overextended
- iii. Not allowing enough free time for unforeseen circumstances.



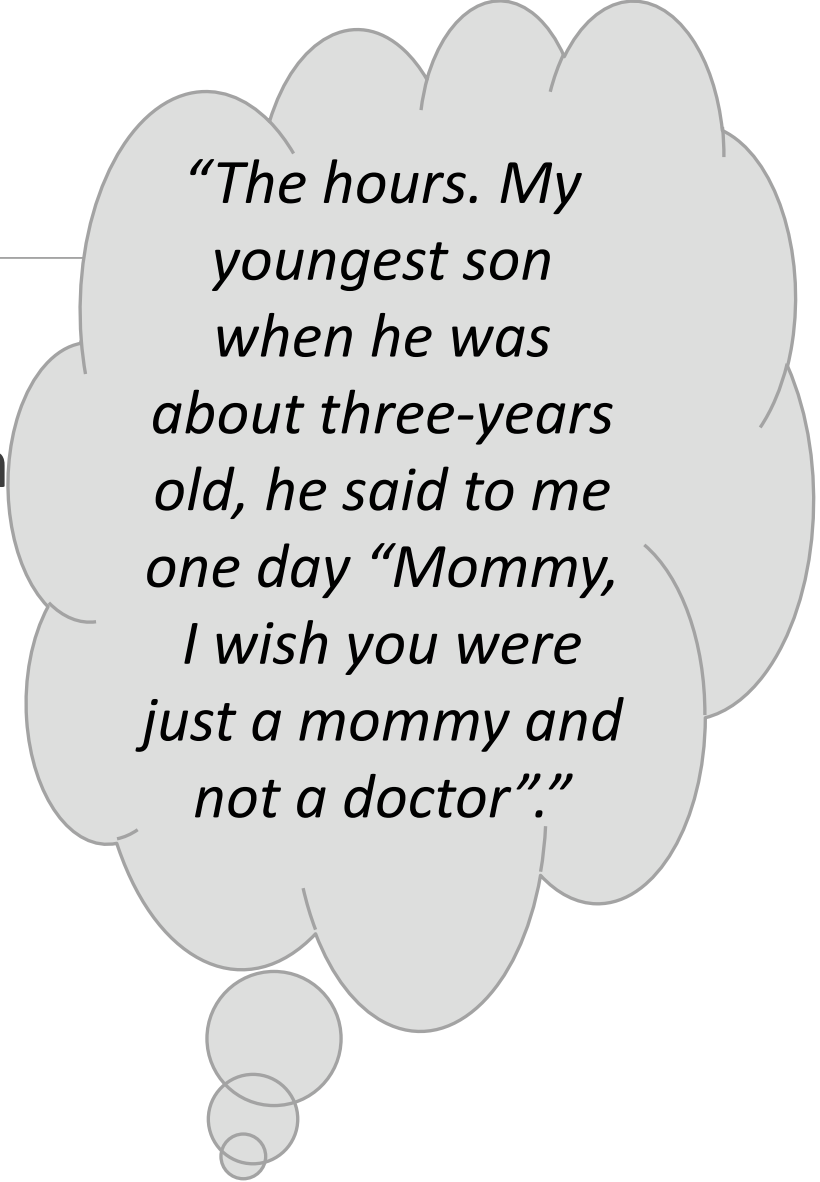
“Oh, being at three places at once, so the time pressure of, you know, being late in clinic, having patients waiting. You’re an hour behind, they’re getting grumpy, you have to take a phone call, you can’t stay on schedule. Then the unpredictability of the workday, on the ends, so getting home on time, I find that most stressful.”

Time management

Broad approach to time management:

categorize requests on your professional time in three groupings:

- i. Urgent
- ii. Important
- iii. Not important



“The hours. My youngest son when he was about three-years old, he said to me one day “Mommy, I wish you were just a mommy and not a doctor”.”

Time management

Specific guidelines:

- i. **Be flexible.** Although, you should have a structured plan for each day's activities, it is essential to avoid being rigid, for this can prove to be counterproductive.
- ii. **Promptly Respond to consultation requests.** It is in your best interest to respond without delay to all calls for your assistance.
- iii. **Avoid delaying decisions.** When you feel qualified to act, based on your knowledge, experience, and level of responsibility, do not procrastinate unjustifiably. If you have valid reason for holding off, seek advice and guidance from your superior as soon as possible and then respond.
- iv. **Update your knowledge.** This can prove valuable in improving the quality of your patients' care and further your base of clinical knowledge.





Keys to good patient management

Always seek to practice good medicine

Develop ways to establish communication with all categories of patients

Treat all patients equally irrespective of their social class

Listen to your patients. Focus on them

Learn to use the “tools of the trade”

Be courteous to your patients.

Seek to understand the reasons why some of your patients may be “difficult”



Stress and residency

The inherent character and demands of the postgraduate training process clearly lend themselves to generating a stressful lifestyle

A study from Ilorin showed that

- i. 94.5% of residents at UITH feels that residency is stressful.
- ii. But only 3% perceived their ability to handle stress as poor.
- iii. Frequent examination, insufficient sleep and high workload were perceived as stressful factors
- iv. 32.9% would not mind changing their training to other specialty
- v. 19.8% think the stress of residency training is worth changing a career for.



Issa et. al. Stress in Residency Training as Perceived by Resident Doctors in a Nigerian University Teaching Hospital. *European Journal of Scientific Research*

Residency and Stress

*“Into each resident’s life,
some stress must come...*

*...but it is how you handle it
that is important.”*



Coping with Stress

At the very outset, it should be clearly recognized that, if you are capable of graduating from medical school, you have already proven that you can cope effectively with stress induced by intense educational and training demands



Coping with Stress

Maintain your physical health as optimally as possible.

Try to meet pending responsibilities without becoming overwhelmed

Utilize your time efficiently

Realize and accept the fact that some stressful situations are completely unavoidable.

Find satisfying and wholesome outlets for dissipating stress and frustrations

When possible, avoid situations that you know in advance will be stressful.

When possible, allow for several periods of relaxation, however brief, during the day.



Coping with Stress

| Strategies | Often (%) | Sometimes (%) | Rarely (%) |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Talking to others | 23(31.5) | 35(47.9) | 15(20.5) |
| Avoiding people | 7(9.6) | 35(47.9) | 31(42.5) |
| Sleep more | 4(5.5) | 30(41.1) | 39(53.4) |
| Eat more/less | 5(6.8) | 35(47.9) | 33(45.2) |
| Smoking | 0(0) | 0(0) | 73(100) |
| Alcohol | 0(0) | 3(4.1) | 70(95.9) |
| Drug/medicine | 0(0) | 13(17.8) | 60(82.2) |
| Look at the better side of things | 28(38.4) | 43(58.9) | 2(2.7) |
| Physical exercise | 9(12.3) | 26(35.6) | 38(52.1) |
| Spiritual help | 47(64.4) | 18(24.7) | 8(11.0) |
| Do something else enjoyable | 35(47.9) | 36(49.3) | 2(2.7) |
| Self blame | 1(1.4) | 46(63.0) | 26(35.6) |
| Wish situation would go away | 25(34.2) | 43(58.9) | 5(6.8) |

Coping strategies of resident doctors....Issa et al

Remember:

If you fail to cope with the stress

It leads to burnout

Burnout can be defined as:

- **a** : exhaustion of physical or emotional strength or motivation usually as a result of prolonged stress or frustration **b** : a person suffering from burnout. Webster's dictionary

Avoid it



Remember

“...to have a quality of life, you have to have a life outside of medicine. That’s the bottom line!”

Maintaining efficiency

Set goals:

- Categorize them
- Be flexible about your goals
- Measure your progress

Set priorities:

- Must do list
- Should do list
- An electronic organizer as obtained in smartphones and tablets is most useful for this

Delegate responsibility

Time-saving approaches

Avoid procrastination

Respond to calls promptly

30 steps to success in residency

- i. Provide good medicine
- ii. Be tolerant
- iii. Listen well
- iv. Evaluate carefully
- v. Inquire appropriately
- vi. Demonstrate concern
- vii. Act with humility
- viii. Be prepared
- ix. Focus on the patient
- x. Don't be overconfident
- xi. Proceed promptly
- xii. Ascertain the facts
- xiii. Speak carefully
- xiv. Be courteous
- xv. Avoid arrogance
- xvi. Start early
- xvii. Access data efficiently
- xviii. Set a routine
- xix. Get sleep when possible
- xx. Exercise whenever possible

30 steps to success in residency

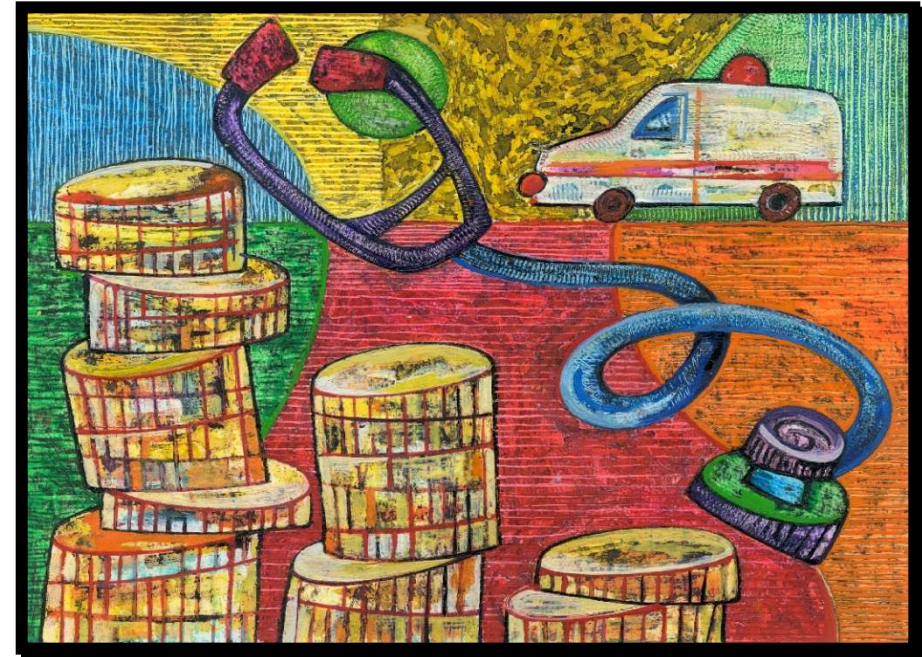
- xxi. Use discretion
- xxii. Act with consideration
- xxiii. Communicate
- xxiv. Obtain feedback
- xxv. Eat appropriately
- xxvi. Join a support group
- xxvii. Remain in touch
- xxviii. Educate appropriately
- xxix. Be organized
- xxx. Learning is the key



Protecting your assets

Residency places heavy demands on physicians-in-training, not only intellectually but also physically and emotionally

Pay careful attention to both your physical and emotional well-being



Protecting your assets

Nutrition

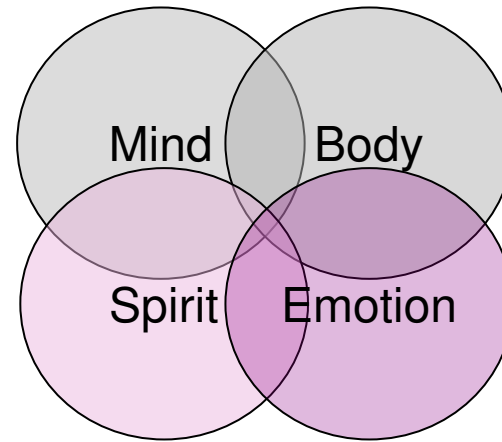
Sleep

Exercise

Learn how to cope with night calls

Infection precautions

Safety precautions



Attaining Academic Excellence

The resident as a student



During residency, learning takes place in hospital wards and in outpatient clinics





The resident as a student

Your clinical experience during the course of a residency will focus on four aspects:

- i. **Learning by observation and participation:** This takes place during rounds when diagnoses, treatment plans, patient progress, and prognoses are discussed.
- ii. **Learning by performing tasks.** This involves carrying out, frequently under super-vision, procedures usually relevant to the specialty.
- iii. **Learning by listening.** This occurs during the course of conferences and workshops when medical topics are discussed in depth by attending physicians, visiting specialists, and house staff.
- iv. **Learning by self-education** .This involves the use of a wide range of resources: texts, journals, audiotapes, videotapes, online Web sites, abstract services, etc.

Learning by self-education: Tips

To enhance your learning, the following suggestions may prove useful:

- i. If during the course of rounds useful knowledge is offered, make a note of it so that the information is available for future reference.
- ii. Become a subscriber to at least one major journal in your field of specialization.
- iii. When scanning journals, pay particular attention to recent review articles. These will be a sound source for obtaining in-depth, current, and comprehensive information on relevant topics.
- iv. When possible, read up on the topic to be discussed prior to a lecture or conference. The information presented will likely then be more meaningful.



Learning by self-education: Tips

To enhance your learning, the following suggestions may prove useful:

- i. Utilize appropriate pocket manuals to obtain on-the-spot information while on duty.
- ii. Use the occasion of leading a grand rounds presentation to focus on a topic that would be both of general interest to the audience and of special interest to yourself.
- iii. Utilize synopses of comprehensive texts to obtain relative quick reviews of a subject.
- iv. Seek to learn by asking questions at rounds. Showing interest in gaining knowledge will also leave a favourable impression on your supervisors.



Preparing for exams

Set aside a specific time for study and whenever possible, try to stick to that schedule.

Inquire from senior residents as to the nature of the examinations given previously. This will help familiarize you with what to expect.

If it fits into your learning style, join a study group, which may facilitate your learning.

Begin studying with the relevant topics you are most knowledgeable about or most comfortable with. Productive learning reinforces your self-confidence and encourages moving on to more difficult topics.

Try to master a subject in its logical framework, rather than as distinct blocks of knowledge and/or data. By this means your retention of information should be better.



Preparing for exams

Allow some study time for review of the basic sciences that are relevant to your specialty.

Incorporate into your study plan reading about specific common cases as well as some rare ones.

Be aware that the patients you care for on your service may be chosen as case presentations on exams. Carrying out a thorough work-up, followed by some relevant reading, will help prepare you for such eventualities.

Preparing for exams

Bear in mind a resident's limited time and that you will tend to be fatigued by day's end. You should, therefore, pace study activities to be consistent with your physical and mental state. Efficient study is productive, facilitating both absorption and retention of information.

Focus your efforts on problem-solving, rather than memorization. This should enhance your exam performance.

Seek to comprehend the subject at hand before trying to commit it to memory.

Preparing for exams

Seek to comprehend the subject at hand before trying to commit it to memory.

Remember that knowledge associated with concepts or principles is retained more readily than isolated facts.

After a solid study session, get a good night's sleep. Your chances for retention of the material are thereby increased.

A major aspect of retention is repetition. Short reviews of the material will enhance achieving this goal.

Avoid cramming for exams. This feeling of inadequacy of knowledge can induce pretest anxiety.

The End

THANK YOU

To ask questions, please join the forum at
www.oluwadiya.com

