

Supplemental Digital Appendix 1

Medical Errors Survey

This research study aims to understand your attitudes and experiences regarding medical errors.

For these questions, please consider your experiences with medical errors during your residency training. For the purposes of this survey, medical errors are defined as the failure of a planned action to be completed as intended (i.e., error of execution) or the use of a wrong plan to achieve an aim (i.e., error of planning) in the course of managing a patient's medical condition.

PLEASE READ THE INSTRUCTIONS AT THE BEGINING OF EACH SECTION CAREFULLY. THE INSTRUCTIONS CONTAIN DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS CONTAINED IN THE PROCEEDING QUESTIONS.

Responses are completely anonymous. No individual responses will be given to your program, your program director, your faculty, or your institution.

Thank you for your participation.

Note: This survey was administered electronically. The electronic survey contained skip logic that cannot be replicated in this paper version.

Section 1: Medical Errors Resulting in Harm to Patients

The following questions deal with harmful medical errors.

Medical errors are defined as the failure of a planned action to be completed as intended (i.e., error of execution) or the use of a wrong plan to achieve an aim (i.e., error of planning) in the course of managing a patient's medical condition.

Harmful medical errors are medical errors that result in transient or permanent injury to patients (e.g., physical discomfort or disability, need for additional therapy or procedures, emotional distress, or death).

1. Have you ever OBSERVED a harmful medical error?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

2. Have you ever MADE a harmful medical error?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

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Section 2: Disclosure

The following questions deal with the disclosure of harmful medical errors.

When considering disclosure to patients, include disclosure to a patient's health care proxy or guardian for incapacitated or pediatric patients.

1. Have you ever NOT disclosed to a patient a harmful medical error you made?
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No

2. [If "Yes" to Question #1 above] Which factors contributed to you NOT disclosing to a patient a harmful medical error made? (Check all that apply.)
 - ☐ Disclosure was not in the patient's best interest (e.g., I did not think the patient would want to know or I thought it would be too upsetting to the patient.)
 - ☐ Feeling ashamed
 - ☐ Lack of continuity with the patient (e.g., error made while cross-covering the patient.)
 - ☐ Legal concerns
 - ☐ Reluctance of more senior members of the health care team to disclose the error
 - ☐ Uncertainty regarding how to specifically address errors (e.g., uncertainty regarding hospital policy, phrasing of the disclosure, etc.)
 - ☐ Error caused only minor harm (e.g., neither permanent nor life-threatening)
 - ☐ Other _____

3. Have you ever NOT disclosed to more senior members of the health care team a harmful medical error you made?
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No

4. [If "Yes" to Question #3 above] Which factors contributed to you NOT disclosing the harmful medical error you made to more senior members of the healthcare team? (Check all that apply.)
 - ☐ Concern that your career, reputation, or evaluations would be negatively impacted
 - ☐ Fear that you would be treated harshly (e.g., humiliated, verbally abused, etc) by other members of the health care team
 - ☐ Feeling ashamed
 - ☐ Lack of continuity with the patient (e.g., error observed while cross-covering the patient.)
 - ☐ Legal concerns
 - ☐ Concern that your colleagues would be negatively impacted
 - ☐ Time constraints
 - ☐ Error caused only minor harm (e.g., neither permanent nor life-threatening)
 - ☐ Other _____

5. Have you ever attempted to evade responsibility (e.g., attempt to conceal the error or shift the blame) for a harmful medical error you made?
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No

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Section 3: Role Modeling

The following questions deal with your observations of other members of the health care team responding to medical errors.

Apologizing is defined as taking responsibility for the error and expressing remorse and a desire to make amends.

1. How often have you observed a more senior member of the healthcare team accept responsibility for a medical error they made?
☐ Never ☐ Seldom ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often
2. How often have you observed a more senior member of the healthcare team disclose a medical error to a patient?
☐ Never ☐ Seldom ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often
3. How often have you observed a more senior member of the healthcare team apologize to a patient for a medical error they made?
☐ Never ☐ Seldom ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often
4. How often have you observed a colleague be treated harshly (e.g., humiliated or verbally abused) for a medical error they made?
☐ Never ☐ Seldom ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often
5. How often have you observed a more senior member of the healthcare team attempt to evade responsibility (e.g., attempt to conceal the error or shift the blame) for a medical error they made?
☐ Never ☐ Seldom ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often

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Section 4: Attitudes Regarding Errors, Disclosure, and Apology

The following statements deal with your attitudes regarding medical errors, disclosure, and apology. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement.

1. If I acknowledge making a medical error, I will be treated harshly (e.g., humiliated or verbally abused) by another member of the healthcare team.
☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly agree
2. If I disclose a medical error to a patient, they are more likely to sue.
☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree
3. If I disclose a medical error to a patient, it will negatively impact the doctor-patient relationship.
☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree
4. If I acknowledge making a medical error, it will negatively impact my career (e.g., impact on evaluations, reputation, or recommendations).
☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree
5. I have to compromise my own values when dealing with medical errors at my institution.
☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree
6. Apologizing to patients for medical errors I make is important.
☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree
7. If I make a medical error that harms a patient, fully disclosing the error to the patient is the right thing to do.
☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree
8. I feel prepared to have a conversation with a patient in which I disclose a harmful medical error I made.
☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree
9. I feel free to express concerns to other members of the healthcare team about medical errors in patient care.
☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

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Section 5: Demographics

Please answer the following demographic questions.

1. What is your gender?
 - ☐ Male
 - ☐ Female
2. What is your level of training?
 - ☐ Fourth-Year Medical Student
 - ☐ Intern (PGY-1)
 - ☐ Resident (PGY-3)
3. [Housestaff only] What medical center are you affiliated with? (Check all that apply.)
 - ☐ Medical Center A
 - ☐ Medical Center B
4. [Medical students only] What medical school are you affiliated with?
 - ☐ Medical School A
 - ☐ Medical School B
 - ☐ Medical School C
 - ☐ Medical School D
 - ☐ Medical School E
 - ☐ Medical School F
 - ☐ Medical School G
5. [Housestaff only] What type (i.e., specialty) of the residency program are you currently in?
 - ☐ Medical Specialty (Includes Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, and Neurology)
 - ☐ Surgical Specialty (Includes General Surgery, Surgical Subspecialties, and Obstetrics & Gynecology)
6. [Medical students only] Anticipated specialty/residency choice?
 - ☐ Medical or Pediatric Specialty/Subspecialty (Includes Family Practice, Internal Medicine and Medical Subspecialties, Pediatrics and Pediatric Subspecialties, and Neurology)
 - ☐ Surgical Specialty/Subspecialty (Includes General Surgery, Surgical Subspecialty, Obstetrics & Gynecology, and Ophthalmology)
 - ☐ Other/Undecided (Includes Anesthesiology, Dermatology, Emergency Medicine, Psychiatry, Radiology and Others)
7. I have received adequate training on how to respond to medical errors.
 - ☐ Strongly Disagree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Strongly Agree

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