

# Long work hours affect medical residents

September 7 2005

---

Researchers say long hours of work required of most medical residents affects their neurobehavioral performance like alcohol impairment.

Researchers said medical interns who got 5.8 fewer hours sleep, had 50 percent more attentional mistakes, and made 22 percent more serious errors on critical care units while working a traditional schedule, compared with a schedule with fewer hours.

J. Todd Arndt of the University of Michigan and colleagues compared post-call neurobehavioral performance of 34 medical residents after their rotations to examine the effect of extended work hours.

The researchers found performance impairment during a heavy call rotation was comparable to impairment associated with a .04 to .05 grams percent blood alcohol concentration during a light call rotation.

Compared with light call, heavy call reaction times were 7 percent slower and lane variability and speed variability during a simulated driving test were 27 percent and 71 percent greater, in that order.

"These findings have important clinical implications," researchers concluded. "Residents must be aware of post-call performance impairment and the potential risk to personal and patient safety."

The study is detailed in the Sept. 7 issue of the Journal of the American Medical Association.

*Copyright 2005 by United Press International*

Citation: Long work hours affect medical residents (2005, September 7) retrieved 17 July 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2005-09-hours-affect-medical-residents.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.