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49 Development of an Elective Rotation in Observation Medicine

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Objectives: To describe a new rotation in observation medicine (OM) for emergency medicine (EM) residents.

Background: According to the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) approximately 36% of emergency departments (EDs) have a dedicated observation unit (OU). Only a third of EM programs have observation units. Of those, only 9.8% of programs have a required rotation. The Model for the Clinical Practice includes observation medicine as part of the training requirements. This rotation is based at the EDOU at Parkland Memorial hospital, which contains 25 beds in close proximity to the ED. There are just over 9000 admission per year with an approximately 10% conversion to full admission rate. The average length of stay is approximately 18 hours.

Methods: We developed a 4-week elective rotation for senior residents in the EDOU. The unit is staffed by nurse practitioners (NPs), supervised by EM faculty, who round twice a day. The rotation includes clinical rounds with the EDOU medical director and EM faculty (Monday through Friday). It also requires readings from book chapters and relevant literature. The residents are involved in the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) activities for the unit, and a performance improvement project. The EM resident is required to attend both hospital-based and departmental-based meetings surrounding the EDOU thus exposing them to them to the administrative aspect of OM.

Results: Two senior residents undertook the rotation in the first year it was offered. They were very satisfied with the experience and they all completed the requirements.

Conclusion: An elective in OEM is a viable and useful alternative for EM residents. In the future, such a rotation should be mandatory, as more of these units develop across the country and EM graduates are required to have the skill set to practice in this setting. The unit allows for interaction between residents and physician extenders, another area in which the residents gain useful education.