SLEEP MEDICINE EDUCATION IN AMERICA’S FAMILY MEDICINE RESIDENCY PROGRAMS: A CERA STUDY

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Introduction/Background: Sleep disorders are very common in the primary care setting and have significant impact on morbidity and mortality. This would suggest that there should be a significant amount education on these disorders in primary care postgraduate medical education. To date there are no published data on the amount of sleep medicine didactics resident-level physicians receive.

Methods/Intervention: The Council of Academic Family Medicine’s Educational Research Alliance conducts an annual survey of American Family Medicine Residency program directors. The most recent survey conducted December 2012 to February 2013 included multiple choice questions to assess: the amount of didactic time spent on sleep disorders, the number of programs with access to a sleep specialist, and the program directors’ plans for the future of sleep medicine in their curricula.

Results/Outcomes: 440 program directors were surveyed with a response rate of 51%. A majority of programs (79%) spend less than 3 hours on the education of sleep related topics over a 3 year curriculum. Relative to the topic of obesity, a majority of programs (62%) spend less didactic time on sleep disorders. 97% of programs do not have a sleep specialist on faculty and only 44% have an available clinical sleep medicine experience. 82% of program directors plan not to change the emphasis of sleep disorders in their curricula.

Conclusion: Although sleep disorders are a common complaint in the primary care setting, Americas’ Family Medicine Residencies may not be adequately preparing trainees to diagnose and treat these common conditions. These data suggest family medicine educators place very little emphasis on the topic of sleep medicine in their academic curricula.