Training Matters: A Retrospective Study of Physician Disciplinary Actions by the Louisiana State Board of Medical Examiners, 1990–2010

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Research Question

Are physicians who do not complete three years residency training more likely to be disciplined by the state medical board?
Data

- Study period 1990-2010
  - 652 Sanctioned; 6,977 controls
- LSBME Licensing and Investigation Files
- AMA Masterfile
- Investigator classification/Interpretation
  - Disciplinary History
  - Severity of the action
  - Occasional Reading between the lines
What They Were Sanctioned For

- 36% for drugs/alcohol
  - >half for relapse
- 35% for pain/obesity rules
- 27% involved competency
- 26% involved fraud or lying
- 16% of cases involved the DEA
  - 12.6% for diversion
- 15% were self-prescribing
- 16% MH issue not related to addiction or abuse
- 9.5% for sexual boundary issues
- 4% were sanctioned for immoral conduct
- 24% tracking actions from other state boards
Analysis

- Looked at likelihood of being subject of disciplinary action
- Looked specifically at likelihood of being sanctioned for
  - Competence
  - Crime
  - Improper Prescribing
  - Fraud/Lying
  - Substance Abuse
Main findings (1)

- Male physicians twice as likely to be disciplined
- International medical graduates less likely to be disciplined
- Physicians in General Practice, Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, Emergency Medicine, OB-GYN and Psychiatry were more likely to be disciplined than other specialties
Main findings (2)

- Only 4.8% of all physicians in study had <3 years GME, but 25% of this group was disciplined, compared to 7.7% of those with more training.
- 14% of sanctioned physicians have less than 3 years GME, compared to 4% of controls
- Physicians with less than 3 years training are 2.4 times more likely to be disciplined, after controlling for gender, specialty, international graduate status
- Physicians who do an internship but do not complete the next 2 years of training are 3.2 times more likely to be the subject of a disciplinary action
- Physicians who are not board certified are 3.7 times more likely to be disciplined
Current Requirements for licensure

- 33 states require 1 post-graduate year for full licensure
- 2 states require 2 years
- 1 state requires residency completion (South Dakota)
- Various differing requirements for international medical graduates
Lack of residency completion

- Job options poor
- Potential for bad choices
- Debt issues
- Issues re moonlighting/rural hospitals
Questions
Comments
Discussion