

Mental Care for Residents under the New Clinical Training System in Japan

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Abstract

The new clinical training system that was instituted in 2004 in Japan makes it obligatory for every doctor to complete a residency of two years or longer, while under the past system, such a recommendation only regarded the actual training period, running from one to two years. In addition, the new system establishes a matching system between hospitals and medical students. Since this system was initiated, problems have emerged regarding the mental health of residents, resulting in increased absenteeism. To elucidate factors that influence the mental health of the residents at university hospital A, I conducted a survey of doctors who completed the same training course in the past. Results revealed that the doctors surveyed felt that they had little control over their work, compared to employees in the general workforce, and that their instructors had not provided adequate support. They also reported having felt strong fatigue and dysphoria. In addition, they reported having wanted to talk about their mental health with a specialist other than with another fellow doctor. With reference to this information, it might be possible to establish a better environment for residents at university hospital A.