

PERSPECTIVES...

of a Medical Resident

Robin Huskey, MD

It's hard to describe the typical day of a medical resident. Each physician has selected a specific educational program, has an individualized work schedule, and is assigned to certain patient cases. One can bet, though, that the day is busy and trying, starting somewhere around 6 a.m. at the hospital and ending long after dinnertime for most Americans.

Each day across this country, physicians are completing required residency periods that place them face-to-face with patients with whom they are unfamiliar. These residents are full-fledged physicians in jobs that put their medical school training to the test, drain their energy reserves, and strain their emotional well-being. Welcome to the on-the-job training world of the medical resident.

It's 9 a.m. on a Tuesday morning and Dr. Robin Huskey is preparing to go home. She started her family medicine residency shift at 6 p.m. Monday evening where she worked on team reports, maneuvered through three personnel shift changes, answered pages from clinic patients, advised medical personnel caring for her nursing home patients, responded to hospital floor and emergency room pages, made notations in patient charts

From the diary of Robin Huskey, MD

Tuesday

6 p.m. At the hospital & heading for rounds with the day team
8 p.m. Answering pages from patient floors, ER, nursing home and clinics. Helping medical grad student assigned to be on call with me.

9:15 p.m. Very, very busy in the ER.

Wednesday

2 a.m. ER has been extremely busy since 7 p.m. Have admitted many patients including Patient with mild mental retardation and Schizophrenia being evaluated for possible dehydration and stroke.

- Toddler with pneumonia in need of IV antibiotics and fluids
- Middle-aged female with cryptogenic cirrhosis who requires withdrawal of fluid from her abdomen due to liver failure

16 • Frontiers

- Paralytic with new onset of a rash who needs observation to rule out Rocky Mountain spotted fever
- Young adult with chronic diarrhea and severe abdominal pain

and hospital records, and participated in patient checkout rounds with the inpatient team. All in all, this has been a rather light-duty day made unusual because she did not need to admit any of the patients she cared for during this shift.

Robin had taken care of several personal chores before starting her shift on Monday. General household duties had to be done before taking her mother to a medical appointment. Now on Tuesday morning, she makes her way to the Tennessee Department of Motor Vehicles to obtain a new driver's license before heading to bed where a few hours of welcomed rest are waiting.



Dr. Robin Huskey is the co-chief resident for the UT Graduate School of Medicine Department of Family Medicine. She completed her undergraduate and medical school studies at UT and plans to stay in East Tennessee following her residency. Dr. Huskey enjoys the mountains, playing flute and piano, and sharing life with her family, friends and dog, a Havanese named Emma.

Robin's next few days as Dr. Huskey, resident physician, start in just nine hours. And they are going to be arduous.

Robin Huskey, MD with Lea Anne Law, APR

8 a.m. Check-out rounds with day inpatient team.

10 a.m. Leaving hospital for some time off. Heading to bed after a stop at the gym for a workout. Must get a haircut today plus do some shopping before dinner with friends. Then early to bed tonight.

Thursday

8 a.m. Examine patients as part of clinic duties at University Family Physicians (4.5 days a week).

9:30 a.m. Interview residency candidate as part of my co-chief resident duties.

10 a.m. Back to University Family Physicians clinic

12 p.m. Finished clinic. Today's patients included:

- Elderly patient with diabetes, high cholesterol and congestive failure
- Middle-aged p... with a history of stroke, muscular dystrophy, and ref... se who currently is experiencing chest pressure

- Young adult needing an an... smear and pelvic exam