



FATIGUE

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WORK-HOUR RESTRICTIONS: DO THEY IMPACT THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Work-hour restrictions have been in place in other countries for many years. Canada, for example, has had them for a decade. When restrictions were first initiated, Canadian faculty, just like many of our faculty now, were worried that learning would be compromised.

Fortunately resident education did not suffer. Residents have been equally successful in passing qualifying examinations for the equivalent of Board Certification. Malpractice suits and patient complaints have not increased. Instead residents have had more experiences, more education about difficult conditions, and more critical thinking. The use of simulators has increased with opportunities for practice labs. Perhaps most importantly, competence is no longer based on the number of procedures performed or patients examined; residents are no longer evaluated on predetermined educational goals.

Ramanchuk, a Canadian ophthalmologist, believes that residents are actually more efficient learners than they previously were, with improved resources and skills for faster access to information.