

Many Medical Residents Give Poor Marks to Addiction Training



More than half of internal medicine residents at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston say they were not adequately trained in addiction and other substance use disorders, according to a new survey.

The survey, conducted last year, found residents rated their training in these areas as fair or poor, Health Canal reports. Many said they were not prepared to diagnose or treat addiction or substance use disorders.

"Our residents estimated that one in four hospital inpatients has a substance use disorder, which matches what other studies have found and represents a disease prevalence similar to that of diabetes," lead author Sarah Wakeman, MD said in a news release. "Finding that the majority of residents feel unprepared to treat addiction and rate the quality of their education so low represents a tremendous disparity between the burden of disease and the success of our current model of training."

Wakeman noted several previous studies have indicated a deficiency in addiction education for medical residents. Some programs offer no training in this area, she said.

Massachusetts General Hospital says it has increased residents' training in addiction medicine as a result of the findings.

The survey, based on responses from 101 residents, is published in the journal *Substance Abuse*.

One-quarter said they felt unprepared to diagnose addiction, and 62 percent said they felt unprepared to treat it. Only 13 percent felt very prepared to diagnose addiction, and no residents felt very prepared to treat addiction. Participants were asked six questions to evaluate their knowledge about diagnosing and treating substance abuse. None answered all the questions correctly. Only 6 percent correctly answered all three questions about medication treatment options for addiction.