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I've Got a Consult for You: Cardiology Consultation as a Function of Time of Day

Rationale: Balancing service obligations while meeting core curriculum educational objectives is one of the most significant challenges facing Graduate Medical Education programs in the educational of its trainees. Some programs institute “protected didactic time,” which provides trainees with time devoted strictly to focusing on education. The optimal time in which protected didactic time could occur would ideally occur which simultaneously minimizes disruption to patient care, but remains unknown.

Methods: Dates and times in which a Cardiology consultation was requested was collected at two large academic medical centers – Kings County Hospital Center (KCHC) in September 2021 and University Hospital of Brooklyn (UHB) in December 2021, between the working hours of 8 AM and 5 PM. Contact to the Cardiology service was defined as either a page or phone call to the consultant Fellow. The absolute number of contacts were divided by hourly intervals. Chi-square test was performed to compare differences for absolute counts for the hour with the most pages at KCHC and at UHB for difference.

Results: There were a total of 389 contacts requested (210 at KCHC and 179 at UHB). The greatest proportion of requests at KHCH occurred between 8 AM and 9 AM (18.1%), while the greatest proportion of requests at UHB occurred between 1 and 2 PM (15.6%). The proportion of contact request did not differ between KCHC and UHB from 1 and 2 PM (chi-square 0.712, $p = 0.399$). A trend towards significance was observed between KCHC and UHB between 8 AM and 9 AM (chi-square statistic 3.04, $p = 0.081$).

Discussion: The absolute proportion of contact did not differ between KCHC and UHB. Request for Cardiology consultation was borderline significantly greater at KCHC than UHB between 8 and 9 AM. Understanding the trends and volume can be useful towards finding times for educational enrichment. Additionally, identifying these trends may be useful in optimizing organizational workflow.