Advantages and challenges of working as a clinician in an academic department of medicine: academic clinicians' perspectives


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In 2017, the National Academy of Medicine launched the Action Collaborative on Clinician Well-Being and Resilience, a network of more than 60 organizations committed to reversing trends in clinician burnout. The Collaborative has three goals: Raise the visibility of clinician anxiety, burnout, depression, stress, and suicide. Improve baseline understanding of challenges to clinician well-being. Advance evidence-based, multidisciplinary solutions to improve patient care by caring for the caregiver. The Action Collaborative is composed of five working groups that will meet over the course of four years.

The obvious advantage for clinician-scientists is their involvement in all aspects of translational medicine. Many times this is termed 'bench-to-bedside' medicine, which aims to test new therapeutic concepts in the lab and bring new treatments into the clinic. Although this is the desire of most, if not all, clinical-scientists, I now realize that ideas and experience move in both directions and more frequently flow from 'bedside to bench'. A clinician-scientist is at the intersection of diverse information, combining ideas and knowledge from a diverse spectrum of sources and people. Many of my clinical colleagues do not routinely read basic science journals and may not be up to date on the newest technologies or concepts. This theory of the nature of excellent clinicians provides a holistic perspective of individual performance, informs medical education, supports faculty career development, and promotes clinical excellence in the culture of academic medicine. To explore the construct of the excellent clinician from the broadest perspective, we did not limit the nominating physicians to any criteria, nor did we restrict the number of excellent clinicians each could nominate.

Through an electronic survey, we asked members of the Department of Pediatrics Clinical Advisory Committee (CAC) to nominate physicians who they felt were excellent clinicians.