**Ice Cream Rounds**

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It is no secret that residency is a challenging time. There are significant stressors associated with completing a medical residency: competing time demands, increasing responsibly, encounters with dying and seriously ill patients, sleep deprivation, financial burden and reduced personal time, to name a few.

To help support residents as they navigate the challenges of residency, I founded the Resident Wellness Program at BC Children’s hospital. One of the first of several initiatives to be put into action was Ice Cream Rounds – a confidential, resident-only forum to discuss the highs and lows of residency. The group sessions are supported by UBC’s newly created Postgraduate Resident Wellness Office, and each session is facilitated by Rebecca Turnbull, a Registered Clinical Counsellor for the Wellness office.

The Ice Cream Rounds take place every 2-3 months at B.C. Children’s Hospital. Below is a brief question and answer that provides an introduction to what Ice Cream Rounds are all about!

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**What are the Ice Cream Rounds? Who is involved and how often do you meet?**

**MK:** Ice Cream Rounds is a completely confidential, resident-only forum to discuss the challenges of residency: coping with reduced personal time and increased responsibility, caring for patients with severe illnesses, encounters with death, etc. The participants are interested residents from all years of our pediatric training program. We aim to meet every other month. We are extremely lucky to have Rebecca Turnbull (UBC Wellness Counsellor) to facilitate these sessions. It is a space for us to vent, talk, share and support each other. There is no agenda. People are welcome to participate as much or as little as they like. And as the name suggests, an elaborate ice cream sundae bar is provided!

**How did this initiative get started?**

**MK:** It is a borrowed idea. A similar initiative exists within the pediatric programs in Ottawa and Toronto. I have a strong interest in resident wellness and this is the first of several ideas that I hope put into action. I was lucky to get a lot of support from our program directors and fellow residents, so executing the idea turned out to be very easy.

**What do you feel are the benefits of these meetings?**
**MK:** First, I think that the presence of wellness related initiatives, like Ice Cream Rounds, is an important way for a program to acknowledge that residency is an incredibly stressful and demanding time. It is a way for the program to send a message that self-care and personal wellness is valued.

Second, the sessions are a place for residents to connect over shared experiences and support each other. It helps us to appreciate that we are not alone in the challenges we have faced. And I think it builds a real sense of camaraderie and collegiality among our group.

Finally, it is a proactive way to address resident wellbeing. There are a lot of resources and support for when you are in “crisis mode”. But it’s critical to prevent things from getting there. I think creating an environment where residents can address some of their stressors in a healthy way protects them emotional burn out.

**What is your hope for the future of these meetings?**

**MK:** I hope these sessions acquire a permanent place in the program curriculum. And I would love to see this idea adopted by other programs. The emotional challenges of residency certainly aren’t unique to pediatrics. I also hope for a bit of funding so that I can buy fancier ice cream 😊