Tracer Method and Other Innovations in the Institutional Accreditation Site Visit

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Disclosures

- Ingrid Philibert is employed by the ACGME.

- Peter Nalin, MD is Vice Chair of the Institutional Review Committee and Designated Institutional Official, Indiana University School of Medicine.

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Session Goals

Offer in-depth information on the changes in the ACGME institutional accreditation site visit

- Use of the Resident Survey
- Review/verification of 2011 standards for duty hours and the learning environment
- Changes and efforts to enhance institutional (and program) site visits
  - Tracer Method
  - Increasing resident input into program site visits
  - Shifting the focus from the description of the institution to a review of institutional improvement activities
  - Institutional Team Visits
- Field Staff Professional Development and Preparation for "The Next Accreditation System"
  - The "Inverted" Site Visit

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Statistics

- ~ 9,000 accredited programs, ~ 350 institutions with an institutional review

- Approximately 95-110 institutional review visits per year

- Nearly all 30 members of the field staff conduct institutional visits

  - Expertise/preference for doing institutional visits by former DIOs and field staff with GME administration background

  - Planned future field staff specialization (into a medical and a surgical/hospital-based group) likely will not affect institutional visits

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Use of Resident Survey Data during the Institutional Site Visit

- Site Visitor reviews institutional Resident Survey aggregation to look for patterns
- May follow-up on potentially significant non-compliance across programs or in a single program
  - Focus on institutional monitoring, oversight, institutional assistance with correcting the problem, if indicated
- Information on patterns is used in the meeting with the DIO, and in the resident interview
  - Verify/clarify resident responses
  - Clarify potentially confusing items on the survey
  - If warranted selected "cross-program" issues may be further explored using the Tracer Method (more about that in a minute)

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Use of Resident Survey Data during the Institutional Site Visit (2)

- Data from the Resident Survey is verified and clarified through interviews and review of documentation
  - DIO and GMEC interviews
  - Interviews with residents
  - Review of documentation (duty hour tracking, GMEC Minutes and Notes)
- Reporting focuses on data verified by consensus
  - Entire institution or relevant program(s)
  - Improvements that have addressed/resolved issues identified in the Resident Survey

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Problematic in the Context of Resident Survey Clarification/Verification

- Residents who appear reluctant to discuss concerns
  - The myth of the unhappy resident cohort who completed the survey and "just graduated"
- Differences of opinion among the participants (site visitor will seek to explore causes)
- Potentially problematic in institutional reviews: There often is less familiarity and comfort between the members of the resident interview group – may be a deterrent to frankness
- Generally not done during institutional visits, but possible:
  - Site visitor may subdivide resident group (residents interviewed individually or in small groups by program or site)

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Review of the 2011 Duty Hour and Learning Environment Standards

- No new PIF Questions

- Small number of questions in ADS annual update

- Much of the remainder is assessed by field staff, some questions use tracer method

- Feedback to date: new standards around transitions, faculty teaching of the handover among the more difficult in some specialties

  - Specialties with a significant inpatient component appear to be ahead of the others, but have focused primarily on inpatient, end-of-shift handovers

  - Exception and potentially significant source of institutional learning: Obstetrics-Gynecology

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Tracer Method: Origins

- The 2008 IOM Report on Resident Duty Hours

- In addition to duty hour specifics, the report emphasized handovers, supervision, resident involvement in quality and safety initiatives

- Challenged the ACGME to develop an annual evaluation of programs (related to duty hour compliance)

- Produced an enhanced broader focus on an assessment of programs' improvement activities

- One mechanism for assessment during the site visit: **The Tracer Method**

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Tracer Method in Institutional Reviews: Aims

- Enhance the review of selected elements of the institutional site visit
  - Improvement activities in response to patterns in citations
  - Identified in Attachment 1 and 2 to the Institutional Review Document (IRD)
  - Follow-up to any potential patterns in ACGME Resident Survey Responses
- Assess and report on other areas of institutional improvement, as relevant

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Tracer Method in Institutional Reviews: Aims (2)

- Enhance reporting on operating institutional oversight focus on "Planning, Implementation, Monitoring, Improvement"

- Provide a forum for discussion of important topics related to the new requirements for duty hours and the learning environment

- Emerging: Provide opportunities for site visitors to educate institutional leaders and share innovative practices

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Tracer Method: Process

- Seeks information on efforts to address cross-cutting citations or potentially significant non-compliance identified by the resident survey

  - Areas identified from the IRD and other data reviewed in preparation for the site visits

- Focuses site visit on relevant, high-priority issues for the institution being site visited

- Ultimately planned to address 2 to 4 areas/items per institutional review

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Tracer Method: Process (2)

- Done during the regular interviews (no walk around questions)

- No separate section in the site visit report

- A work in progress

- **New Guidance for Program Site Visits for 2012:**

  - Added emphasis for programs to discuss improvements in the "changes since the last site visit" and "annual program evaluation" sections of the PIF

  - More detail in the Spring 2012 ACGMe-Bulletin

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A Few Important Changes in the Program Site Visit: Enhancing Resident Input

- Requesting a list of Strengths and Opportunities for Improvement (OFIs) from residents prior to the program site visit
  - Note sent though the program director asks the residents to complete and submit a single, confidential "consensus list" of 5 strengths and areas for improvements they would like to discuss
  - Address the omission of free text data from the ACGME resident survey in 2009
  - Residents report that the new approach makes them feel more connected to the site visit
  - Strengths are always shared with the program director; OFIs are shared with permission of the residents

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A Few Important Changes in the Program Site Visit: The "Inverted" Site Visit

- Begins with a brief meeting with the Program Director and PIF corrections

- Followed by the resident and faculty interviews, the meeting with the DIO and finally the PD

- More focus on the program, less on the description of the program

- Shortens PIF review, emphasizes reconciling potentially discrepant information

- Problematic matters can be brought to the attention of the DIO

- Surprise: Program Directors love it

- Spring 2012: Moving from pilot to implementation

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Upcoming Changes in Program and Institutional Site Visits

- **Having all institutional review visits after July 1, 2012 performed by a team of 2 site visitors**

- Aims

  - To enhance data collection and allow visits to major participating institutions

  - To expand the resident interview

  - To attempt to reduce variance

- Abbreviated exception reporting

- Broader implementation of the inverted site visits

- In addition to institutional team visits, team site visits for selected programs (to test the team approach that will be used in the Next Accreditation System)

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Ongoing Efforts to Enhance Field Staff Professional Development and Preparation

- Enhanced guidance around review of resident survey
- Verifying duty hour compliance
- Interview techniques to promote confidentiality and frankness
- Guidance for how to offer helpful suggestions without potentially compromising the review process
- Preparing for the Next Accreditation System
  - Enhanced education in assessment and working with data
  - Enhanced team training for the members of the field staff
  - The PIF-Less Site Visits as an early "Proof of Concept" Pilot to prepare for Next Accreditation System
  - Tested at 2 institutions, test at a 3rd institution planned for spring of 2011

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Questions and Answers