

Decision aids to accompany RANZCOG Statement: WPI-18 Fatigue Risk Management on Obstetric and Gynaecological Practice

Organisational, departmental, and individual responsibilities to mitigate the risks associated with fatigue

Am I safe to work?

For use by members, fellows, diplomates and staff

Sleep deprivation has been associated with a global impairment of functioning over multiple domains. Check if:

1. You have been unwell, lacking in rest or pregnant and suffering from symptoms related to pregnancy?
2. You have taken any medication(s) - whether prescribed or over-the-counter - which may have an impact on your ability to fulfill your clinical duties?
3. You have considered if there may be any alcohol in your system?
4. Your physical, mental or emotional wellbeing been impacted by clinical work?
 - a. Has your team debriefed regarding any incidences that require attention?
 - b. Do you or your team members require or wish to receive counselling from an objective third party?
5. There are non-work related factors that may impact your physical, mental or emotional wellbeing?
6. You are fatigued?
 - a. Have you had a long period of restricted sleep?
 - b. Do you have difficulties keeping your eyes open or find yourself micro-napping?
7. You are adequately hydrated and have you eaten?

Important!

- It is the responsibility of the employer and employee together to recognise when a person may not be safe for work, and important also to speak up if you notice a colleague may not be safe for work
- Clinical duties should not be considered to be a sole contributor to fatigue, and non-clinical expectations, study time, research and education activities as well as non-work related responsibilities must be factored into the considerations for each individual clinician.
- The RANZCOG Trainee Support Unit can be contacted for confidential advice about concerns regarding safety at work.

Safety data should be collected by staff and departments related to fatigue and excessive overtime, rostered or unrostered, to inform safe staffing and planning for future rosters

Adapted from: The Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (ANZCA) guideline on fatigue risk management in anaesthesia practice Background Paper (PG43(A)BP (2020) which derives information from: *Fight Fatigue Information Pack* of the Association of Anaesthetists of Great Britain & Ireland, the Faculty of Intensive Care Medicine (UK) and the

Royal College of Anaesthetists (UK) <https://anaesthetists.org/Home/Wellbeing-support/%20Fatigue/-Fight-Fatigue-download-our-information-packs>. This decision aid is adapted to reflect the Australian and New Zealand context.

Tips for night shift fatigue management

For trainees, SIMGs and prevocational staff

Preparation

1. Reduce the time that you are continuously awake by having an afternoon nap prior to commencing night shifts
2. Plan your route home and whether or not you need a rest prior to driving home
3. Prepare healthy snacks.

On shift

1. Maintain a healthy diet, and remain adequately hydrated
2. Try to maintain a consistent routine
3. Ensure time out is taken for breaks
4. Try to have naps if time allows, hospitals should provide safe, secure and private sleeping quarters for doctors on night duties (this is also a RANZCOG accreditation standard)
 - a. Even if you can't sleep, a rest is beneficial, be sure to set an alarm and ensure a quiet, dark room.
5. Be aware of the effect of fatigue on decision making, if there are concerns, contact the on call consultant for decision making advice and consult with other staff on shift at night.

Between night shifts

1. Consider the need to nap prior to driving home, especially after the first night shift
2. Eat a meal prior to going to sleep
3. Aim to sleep as soon as possible post shift
4. Ensure to advise family and friends of your roster to night shifts and avoid day time activities between shifts.

Recovery

1. Aim to have a short sleep after your morning meal and then go about your day as usual
2. Go to bed at your usual time per your day routine and avoid too long a sleep in the following day
3. Maintain exercise, and a healthy diet throughout.

Departmental shift planning checklist

Proposed for the development of safe and effective rostering

Is there adequate staffing?

Consider availability of staff to cover for sick/recreational/mental health or fatigue leave, without the flow on effect to other staff working excess hours ([FRANZCOG Accreditation Standard 6](#))

- If the rosters are shift based, is the direction of shift 'forwards'?, i.e. day, to evening, to night. This direction of rolling shifts is best for managing fatigue.
- Have you considered the rostered duties for an individual the shift following an on-call or late shift (to avoid fatigue)?
- Has consultation and planning with both junior and senior staff taken place to mitigate risk in rostering of clinical duties, after hours cover, and non-clinical time? i.e. ensuring education, research, administrative tasks and personal circumstances are taken into consideration.
- Do the rosters meet (jurisdictional) guidelines for hours worked and time off between shifts?
- Is the submission of all unrostered overtime encouraged and supported?
(The collection of data related to unrostered overtime worked will assist to inform staffing and rostering decisions in the future.)

Got questions?

Consider avenues to discuss rosters (including with RANZCOG ITP Co-ordinators/Trainee supervisors)

See also: AMA: [National Code of Practice - Hours of Work, Shiftwork and Rostering for Hospital doctors](#) (2016)

Do you have concerns about fatigue at work?

Safe working hours is everybody's responsibility, as outlined in: AMA: [National Code of Practice - Hours of Work, Shiftwork and Rostering for Hospital doctors](#) (2016)

Clinicians have a professional responsibility to avoid clinical activities if fatigue, physical or mental health, or stress level, may interfere with patient care. There are many avenues for support:

- Trainee Support Unit: confidential and impartial support service
- Converge International: 24/7 support RANZCOG members
- Maintain a relationship with your own GP
- Seek urgent help if you are experiencing a decline in your mental health
 - **Lifeline: 13 11 44**

Provide feedback?

Departments may consider a mechanism by which staff can provide feedback or concerns within the department, in an open and collegiate manner.

Version	Date of Version	Pages revised / Brief Explanation of Revision
v1.1	July / 2022	Draft decision aids prepared by the Fatigue Working party and approved by Wellbeing Working Group
v2.1	Month / Year	Details
v3.1	Month / Year	Details