

Anyone Have That 2:30 Feeling?

It's that time of day when the morning adrenaline and lunch carbohydrates both come crashing to the floor at a staggering rate. Today is day 274 of residency, and I am tired. I am also somewhat incredulous that 9 months have passed since my first day of orientation. It seems like there is still such an overwhelming amount to learn and accomplish in a very short time. The moment in life when I will transition from general residency to specialized training is rapidly approaching, and at this time next year, I may have already accepted a position as a "real pharmacist." That thought is an interesting combination of terrifying and exhilarating and caused me to pause for a moment today.

As I drove from an off-site meeting back to the hospital, I thought about my general fatigue and desire to stop time. I earnestly thought about *why* I was so tired, which caused me to transition from my pensive state to having this huge smile across my face. I am tired because I have had the opportunity to squeeze the most out of every single minute of the past 9 months. Those minutes passed by at an astounding pace because it's easy to get carried away doing what you love. Residency has provided me the chance to experience amazing areas of pharmacy practice, and it has fostered significant personal and professional growth. I'm tired because I'm trying to learn as much as I can in a limited time and embrace all aspects of the resident life.

As I switched mental gears from "Man, I'm tired" to "Wow, residency rocks," I wondered if other residents across the country felt like I did. I decided to reach out to some colleagues and ask if, amid this season of countless projects, regional research presentations, recruitment, position applications, and, of course, PharmAcademic, among everything else, they were still passionate about residency. I rapidly shot off several text messages and eagerly awaited responses, which did not disappoint. Yes, we are all tired, but for some pretty awesome reasons.

Fostering Meaningful Relationships

We get to meet and learn from so many people throughout residency, including coresidents, preceptors, pharmacists, students, nurses, physicians, administrators, and others within the health care system. Opportunities for networking and collaboration are endless, and each person we encounter helps shape our practice. The camaraderie among coresidents in particular is something that makes residency a powerful experience. I am in awe of the work my coresidents do every single day, and I didn't realize that people who were strangers less than a year ago could become family.

Pushing Personal Limits

Residency is this unique time in life when thousands of type A medical professionals learn to embrace the ambiguity of decision-making, when necessary. We struggle daily with the gray areas of patient care, with balancing work life and personal life, with being pushed outside our comfort zones, and with making mistakes and realizing those mistakes make us better. We gain confidence slowly but surely by pushing ourselves and evaluating complex situations. These situations can present in the form of patients, project management, friendships, working relationships, and many other things. Residency provides the training environment to work through these situations and become stronger than we thought possible. We are humbled in residency by the amount of resources and opportunities our institutions provide and by the incredible faith that hospital leadership puts in us to dig deep and become experts. We are then encouraged to share our knowledge on a local, state, and national level.

Making a Difference in Patient Care

When we work this hard and have a strong support system, we can truly provide patient care that optimizes medication therapy and promotes health. This, above anything else, is the core of why we

dedicate ourselves to residency training and why we are okay with being tired. There is nothing that can compare to a meaningful intervention or the implementation of a project that improves the lives of others. There's no greater feeling in the world than following patients throughout the most critical phase of their illness to discharge or counseling a patient in clinic who is struggling both medically and personally and looks to you for help and hope. Essentially, there's no greater feeling than actively contributing to saving or enhancing someone's life.

Learning Every Single Day

I've realized that approaching the end of my first year and entering my second of residency isn't as scary as I originally thought because I am not supposed to know everything or be able to do everything at this time. In fact, I'm *never* going to know everything or be able to do everything, but I can continue to make a difference as I learn. The coolest thing about pharmacy is that it is a profession full of dedicated, lifelong learners who have a passion for making things better and who consistently seek to improve the lives of others. That may be tiring from time to time, but it is absolutely worth it.

For all the residents out there in the home stretch of this year feeling kind of tired, I hope you have a moment to stop and think about where you are and how you got there. I think you'll be really, really happy with what you discover. And maybe you'll need one less cup of coffee today.

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