

Resident 'Research Days' – Pilot Project

Preamble

The Pediatrics Residency training program has made an explicit commitment over the last several years to enhance our culture of research and scholarship. Many initiatives have been put in place (e.g. research coordinator, methodological support, research checklist, research electives); however, one of the primary barriers to successfully completing scholarly projects appears to be a lack of protected time on a longitudinal basis.

This particular issue may have been exacerbated with the dissolution of 'post-call Mondays', which many residents would use to not only rest and accomplish household tasks, but also to address many of the non-clinical commitments that they undertake as part of their residencies. While there are no grounds to bring back 'post-call Mondays,' developing a flexible strategy to help residents successfully complete their various academic requirements is necessary.

Proposal

During a brainstorming session at the annual RPC retreat in June 2019, the committee put forward the notion of incorporating 'RESEARCH DAYS' into our program. The purpose of this proposal is to define these days and outline the regulations that would govern their use.

Definition:

A research day is a working day (i.e., not leave; post-call) taken by a resident in which they will not attend their clinical rotation and instead, have time to work on an aspect of their scholarly project. As this is a working day, it will NOT count against the 75% rule for the successful completion of a rotation. Residents will have a set number of these days available to them each year. The allotment is based on the typical trajectory of research projects and will be as follows:

- PGY-1: 2 days
- PGY-2: 4 days
- PGY-3: 4 days
- PGY-4: 2 days

**These days can also be taken in ½ day blocks (i.e., two ½ days instead of 1 full-day)*

***A maximum of 50% of these days in each year can be taken during CORE rotations. No more than 1 day per year can be taken in a given core rotation (e.g., NICU, PICU, wards)*

****No more than 1 research day can be taken on any single rotation.*

*****These days CANNOT be added on to vacation days/personal days to create an extended leave.*

******These days DO NOT inhibit a resident from being placed on late call*

Guidelines governing the process of taking a research day:

Research days are a privilege and not a right. As such, the process of requesting and approving these days should be a collaboration between the resident and the rotation coordinator with the aim of assisting the resident while minimizing the impact on the clinical service/rotations (e.g., there may be a better day to take off than another due to the distribution of clinics).

While accomplishing the above requires flexibility, the following regulations will be used to assist in this process:

- Requesting the research day:
 - Residents **MUST** have an approved research project with a supervisor in order to be eligible to request a research day.
 - A research day request is to be made directly to the **rotation coordinator**.
 - Unless the resident has a specific day that they need to take (e.g., participants available for recruitment at a specific time only), the specific day in the rotation that is selected is to be decided BY THE ROTATION COORDINATOR.
 - This will enable rotation coordinators to select days that are the least disruptive to resident learning (e.g., there is no clinic on a specific day) and/or to the clinical service (e.g., based on other resident absences).
 - If the rotation coordinator feels that any additional time away may prevent the resident from meeting objectives or would be significantly disruptive to the service, the day can be refused.
 - A research day should be **PLANNED** and requested AT LEAST 6 WEEKS PRIOR to the start of the rotation (the earlier the request is made the better it is)
 - Residents are encouraged to email the rotation coordinator to discuss the best days for such requests (i.e., avoiding days with specialty clinics, presentations, high patient volumes)
 - Last minute requests will only be granted exceptionally and are at the discretion of the rotation supervisors.
 - Because of the unpredictable nature of clinical services, residents should remain flexible, when possible, to reschedule a research day to another day in the block if asked.
- Approving the research day:
 - Once the rotation coordinator and the resident agree on a specific day to be taken as a research day, the following process is to be undertaken:
 - The resident sends an email to the **program director** (programdirector.pediatrics@mcgill.ca), the **program administrator** (pediatrics-residency2.med@mcgill.ca), the **rotation coordinator** and their **research**

supervisor indicating the date of the research day AND what they will be working on during that time.

- The program administrator will 'reply all' to confirm the day after verifying that additional research days remain available in the residents' bank.

- Should a resident wish to take a research day but be unable to get one approved in a given rotation, they should email the **program director and the program administrator** for tracking purposes ONLY.
 - We would like to collect data on # of days taken, # of days refused, type of work being done on research days, etc.

- Accountability for the research day:
 - Since research days are working days, residents MUST provide proof of the work they have done during the day (e.g. copies of email, progression of data base, number of patients recruited, references reviewed).
 - Residents are responsible for sending this information to the **program director** and **program administrator** as well as their **research supervisor** within 72 hours of the completion of the research day.
 - Residents will not be accorded another research for the remainder of the academic year if this documentation is not submitted.

Pilot implementation

We aim to implement the above on a PILOT bases for periods 8-13 (*residents will have ½ the number of days listed above during this pilot phase*). Data will be collected and a decision will be made as to whether to continue with this initiative for the next academic year by the RPC in May 2020.

Concluding Notes:

As mentioned throughout this proposal, research days are a privilege and not a right. Their aim is to help residents manage the many busy aspects of their academic lives while minimizing the disruption to clinical learning and service. For this to work there must be collaboration between residents and rotation coordinators that is built on mutual support and respect. In doing so, this proposal has the potential to improve resident and research supervisor satisfaction, scholarly productivity and the overall academic mission of our program.