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### **Debunking Medical Myths: Lunar Lunacy**

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# LUNAR LUNACY ARE THERE MORE HOSPITAL VISITS DURING A FULL MOON?

Group Gray 15: Rooshan Arshad, Joseph Cavataio, Mackenzie Howard, John Lloyd, Riya Shah, and Emma Steveler

Healthcare providers have long believed in a connection between increased hospital admissions and the full moon. This superstition may have originated from the brightness of a full moon causing insomnia during the preindustrial era. (5)

However, multiple studies over the past 50-years show that the moon has NO effect on hospital admissions or outcomes. (1-4)

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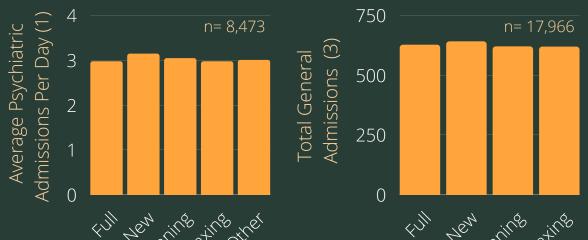
## Did You Know?

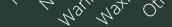
Lunacy and lunatic stem from luna, the Latin word for moon. It is believed that people were more likely to show erratic behavior during a full moon.

"The belief that the moon affects our lives and especially our emotions has existed for thousands of years and appears to be part of a collective, lay wisdom."(3)



Many studies have shown zero correlation between number of admissions and the lunar phase







Lunar Phase

Lunar Phase

Sept. 1993 - June. 2001

Jan. 2005 - Dec. 2015

## So What Now?: Effects on Attitudes and Behavior

- Effect on Patients
  - Patients may feel their physicians are rushing their visits to accommodate more patients
  - Feeling perpetuated as part of a stereotype or seen as an inconvenience for coming in during a full moon
- Effect on Physicians
  - Apprehension/anxiety about their patient and case load during a full moon
  - Rushing through patient encounters because they are expecting more patients to be coming in
- Moving Forward
  - Doctors can communicate with their peers and patients to dispel this medical myth
  - Hospitals can make their admissions data more accessible so both doctors and patients can view how little admissions rates vary during the lunar cycle
  - As future physicians, it is important that we place an emphasis on evidence-based care and medicine and dispel such medical myths for our professional identity formation.(3)

#### <u>Sources</u>

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<sup>4.</sup> Schuld J, Slotta JE, Schuld S, Kollmar O, Schilling MK, Richter S. Popular belief meets surgical reality: impact of lunar phases, Friday the 13th and zodiac signs

 <sup>5.</sup> Raison CL, Klein HM, Steckler M. The moon and madness reconsidered. J Affect Disord. 1999;53(1):99-106. doi:10.1016/s0165-0327(99)00016-6