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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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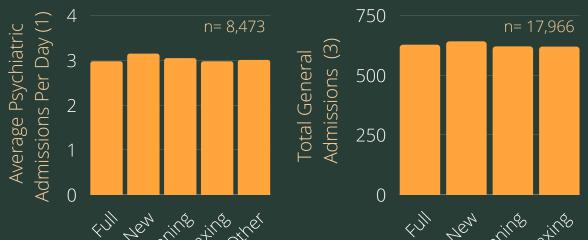
Did You Know?

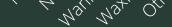
Lunacy and lunatic stem from luna, the Latin word for moon. It is believed that people were more likely to show erratic behavior during a full moon.

"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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^{3.} Gupta R, Nolan DR, Bux DA, Schneeberger AR. Is it the moon? Effects of the lunar cycle on psychiatric admissions, discharges and length of stay. Swiss Med Wkly. 2019;149:w20070. Published 2019 Apr 23. doi:10.4414/smw.2019.20070

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 ^{5.} 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