

## 2 Behaviors and Characteristics of Exemplary Emergency Physicians

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**Background:** Since the ACGME implemented the general competencies for resident development in 2002, educators have documented evidence of their graduates- basic skills in each of the six categories. To surpass competence and facilitate excellence, it is necessary to identify which physician behaviors contribute most to that end point. To date, no attempt has been made to identify the behaviors and characteristics of exemplary EM physicians.

**Objectives:** The study's purpose was to identify specific behaviors causing emergency physicians to be judged as exemplary (by their peers as well a cohort of 4th year med students about to begin EM residency training). The use of two cohorts allowed for additional analysis of any differences between those early versus more advanced in their career.

**Methods:** An act-frequency questionnaire was used in which 131 subjects were instructed to think of 1-3 exemplary emergency physicians whom they have directly observed. They were asked to list behaviors that they had personally observed the role models exhibit, while engaged in their duties that were perceived as exemplary. They were also asked to identify negative behaviors observed in other dysfunctional emergency physicians that were absent from their role models' behaviors.

**Results:** After 6 independent judges sorted responses into the six general competencies the following ranking occurred: 1) Interpersonal/Communication Skills, 2) Professionalism, 3) Patient Care, 4) Practice-based learning, 5) Medical Knowledge, and 6) Systems-based Practice. Within the EM-specific competency sub-categories rank ordering was also done. Some subtle differences were also noted between those about to enter residency training and experienced EM physicians.

**Conclusions:** Interpersonal and professionalism skills accounted for 75% of the total behaviors listed by both cohorts, suggesting that training exemplary physicians will require a strong emphasis on facilitating these specific behavior sets.