

# Stress Management for Care Providers

Self Care for Those Who Care

Richard E. Berger, MD

<https://depts.washington.edu/abrc/stress>

Arriving at the hospital  
can be like...

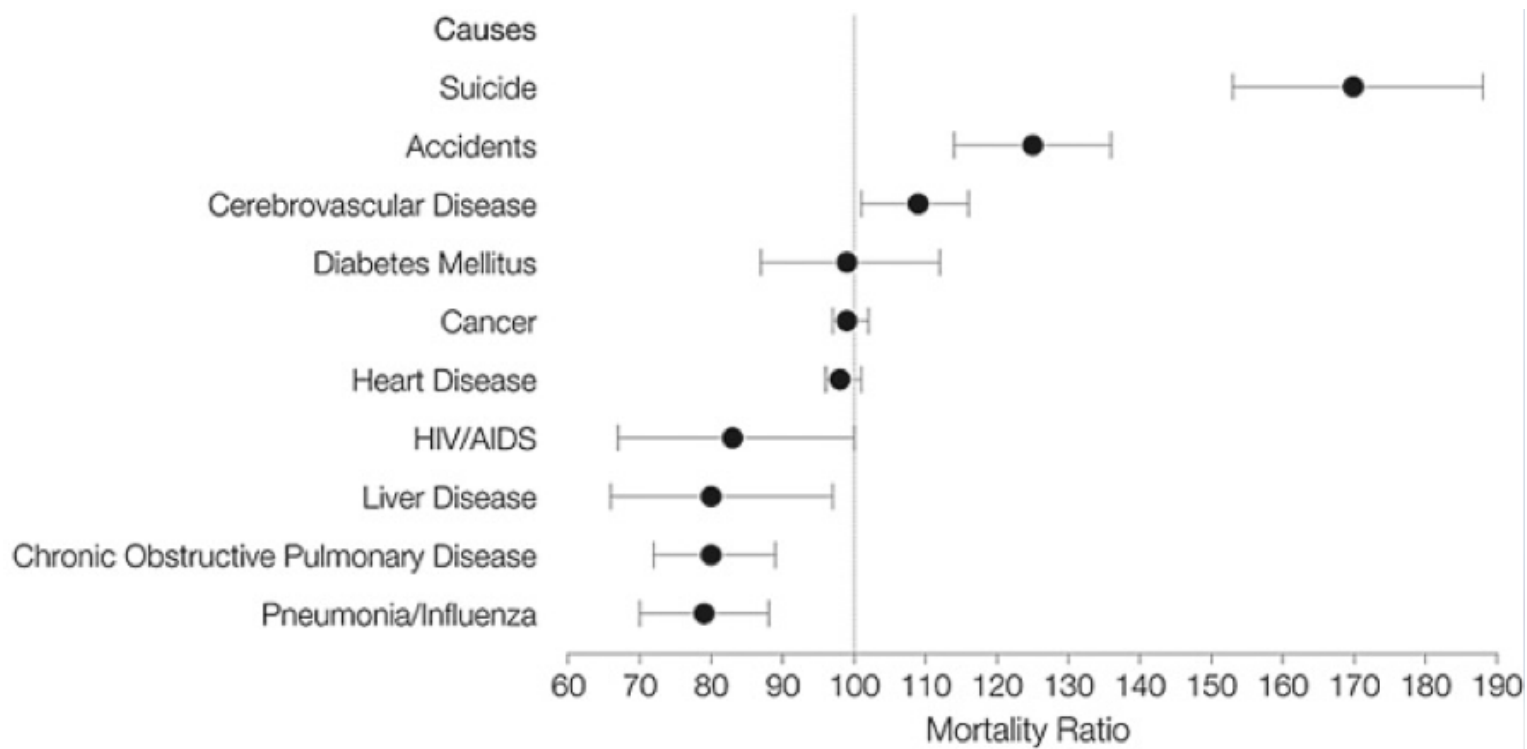


Being up to your ass  
in alligators!

# Physician Mortality Compared to Other Professionals

- Equal overall
- ↑ suicides (RR 1.4-3.8 M, RR 3.7-4.5 F)
- ↑ accidents
- ↑ drug related
- ↑ IHD (African Americans)

# Mortality Rates Male MDs v Male Professionals



# Morbidity Among Physicians

- ↑ burnout
- ↑ depression and anxiety (2x gen. pop.), highest in academics, women and younger faculty
- 20% more divorce
- No primary care
- Poor self care habits
- Decreasing career satisfaction
- Early retirement

# DO PHYSICIANS TAKE CARE OF THEIR HEALTH?

- **In a survey of 114 graduates of the University of Wisconsin surgical training program over a 25 year interval, *50% of surgeons were in poor health by age 49, and 10% rarely exercised, 20% retired early.***
- **The length of a career in medicine was determined by post-residency factors including major health issues, preventive health patterns/ exercise, alcohol use or dependency, family life, and practice satisfaction**

# Burnout is...

- **A syndrome present in many individuals under constant pressure or stress over a long period of time**
- **Characterized by:**
  - **Emotional/physical exhaustion (lack of interest/enthusiasm for work)**
  - **depersonalization (treating patients and co-workers as impersonal objects)**
  - **a decreased sense of personal accomplishment (work is not meaningful or important)**

**“Just not caring any more”**



The secret to caring for the patient is  
to care for the patient.

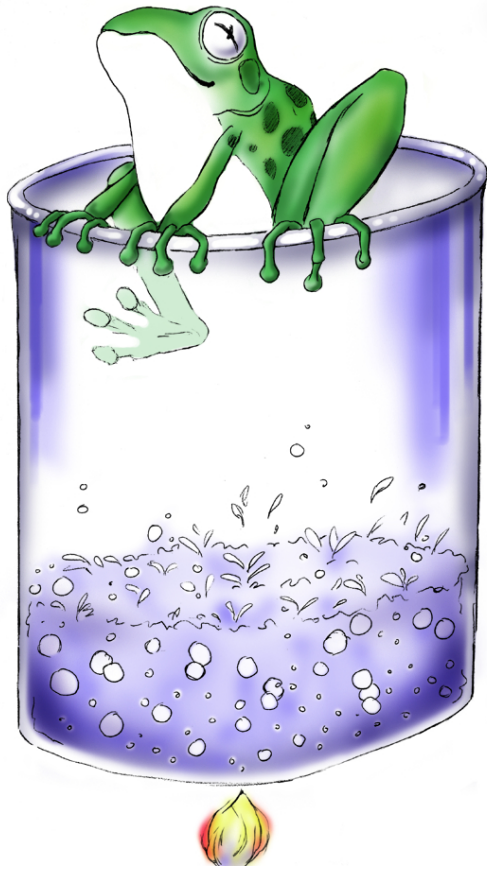
FW Peabody, MD 1925





# AMERICAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS 2008 SURVEY

- **40% of responding surgeons were burned out**
- **32% had high emotional exhaustion**
- **30% of study participants screened positive for depression.**
- **26% demonstrated high depersonalization**
- **13% had low sense of personal accomplishment**



± Denial

# Internal & External Stress

- Expectations of Self/Perfectionism
- Denial of Human Limitations and Needs
  - Mental
  - Physical
- Guilt for Self Care-Lack of Self Compassion
- Increasing workload and external demands
  - Documentation
  - Scrutiny
  - Volume
- Difficulty in saying “NO”

# Physician Development

## **Before Medical Training**

- Empathetic
- Compassionate
- Curious
- Multiple interests
- Good health habits
- Multiple roles
  
- Positive mood
- Thoughtful
- Altruistic
- Humanitarian

## **After Medical Training**

- Depersonalized
- Survival mode
- Task oriented
- Single minded
- Poor health habits
- Over identification with professional role
- Overwhelmed/skeptical
- Reactive
- Self Protective
- More than human

# Professional consequences of burnout:

- **poor judgment in patient care**
- **difficulty in decision-making**
- **hostility towards patients**
- **medical errors**
- **adverse patient events**
- **diminished commitment and dedication to productive, safe and optimal patient care**
- **Diminished relations with colleagues**



**Approximately 15% of all physicians will be impaired at some time in their career and will be unable to meet professional responsibilities because of mental illness, alcoholism or drug dependency**

**(Boisaubin and Levine: Am J Med Sci 2001;322:31-36.)**

Outside Event  
+  
Internal processing ✓  
=  
Experience

# UWMC Stress Management Program

- Web resources
- Lectures-science of mindfulness
- Mindfulness Practice Introduction
- Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Courses
  - Quiet mind
  - Awareness/change habits
  - Examine values, fairness
  - Promote self-compassion

<https://depts.washington.edu/abrc/stress>

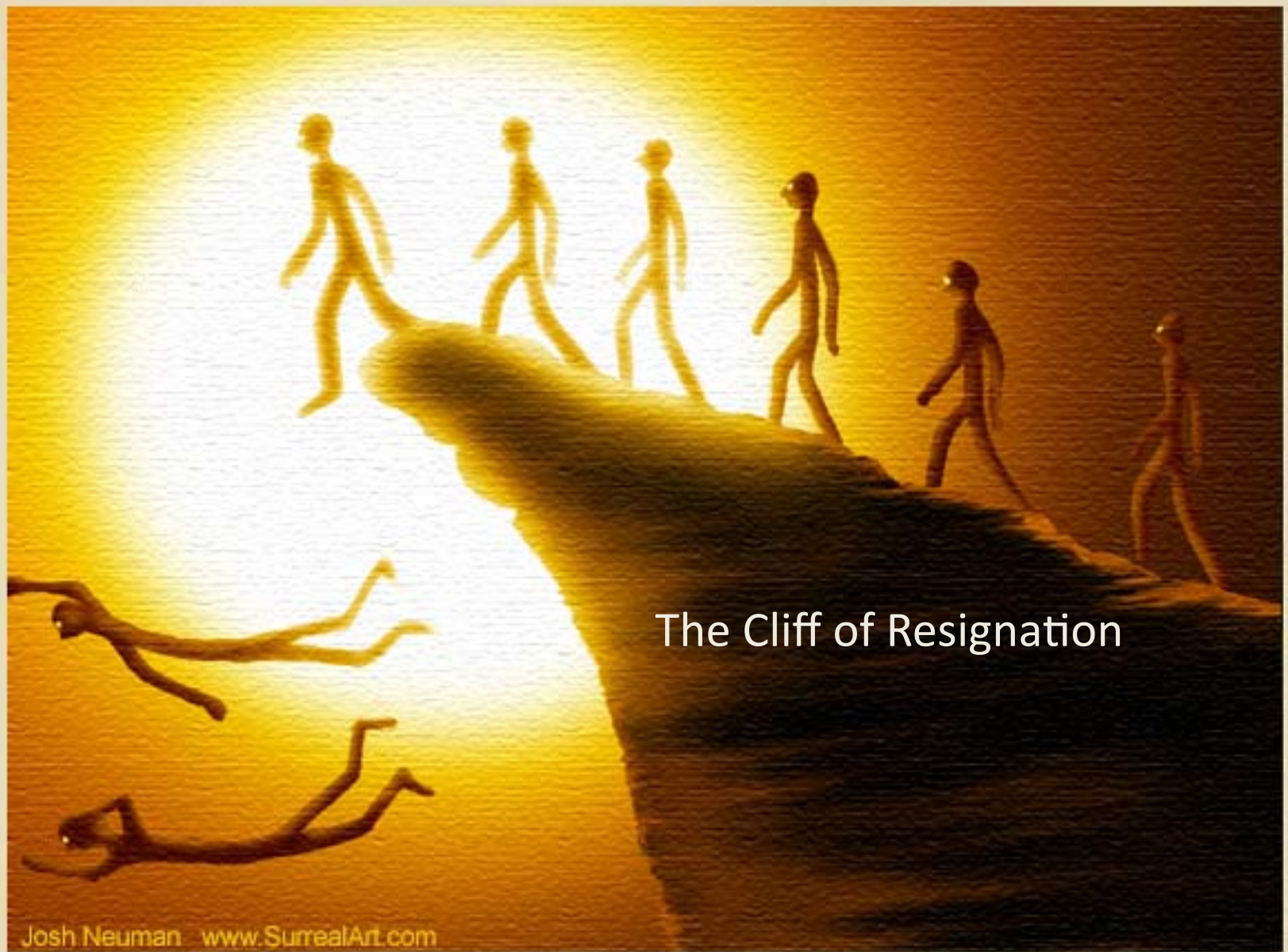
# Assumptions

- Practicing medicine/surgery can be bad for your health
- It is important for providers to be physically and mentally healthy as possible
- In order to be healthy it is important to take control of our minds and bodies
- We can control our brains/behavior by what we practice (habits)
- Improving our health is good for ourselves, our patients and loved ones
- Institutional support systems can improve health and facilitate culture change.



# Recovery of Care Providers

- Recognize and Accept Problem
- Form Intent to Address Problem for Yourself, Loved ones and Patients
- Make Plan for Change
- Make Room in Life for Plan ✓
- Institute Plan, Expand/Revise as Needed
- **PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE**
- **REPEAT**



## The Cliff of Resignation

Josh Neuman [www.SurrealArt.com](http://www.SurrealArt.com)

(c) Lipsenthal 2011

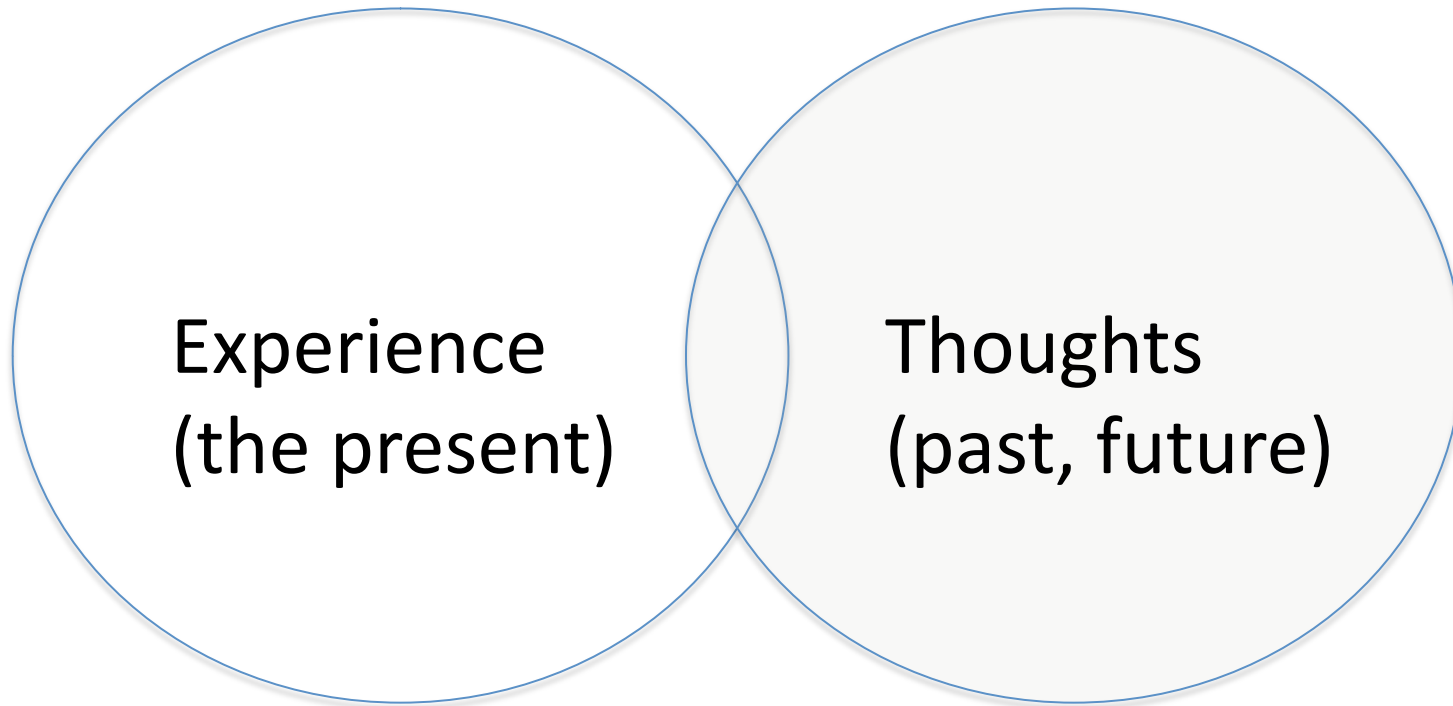
# Working for What?

*We take life so seriously that there is nothing to fill our leisure hours during our working years, and when retirement comes we have nothing to enjoy.*

*—C. H. Mayo, 1935*

*Engrossed late and soon in professional cares ... you may so lay waste your powers that you may find, too late, with hearts given away, that there is no place in your habit-stricken souls for those gentler influences which make your life worth living.*

*—Sir William Osler (1849-1919)*



**IT IS NOT ONLY IMPORTANT TO PAY ATTENTION TO WHAT YOU ARE DOING, BUT ALSO TO PAY ATTENTION *WHATEVER* YOU ARE DOING.**

**MINDFULNESS IS PAYING ATTENTION  
TO THE PRESENT MOMENT ON  
PURPOSE**








MEDITATION IS THE FORMAL PRACTICE OF  
MINDFULNESS.

# MINDFULNESS REQUIRES EXPERIENCING-NOT THINKING

Developing a different  
Relationship to your  
thoughts



# How Mindfulness Works

- Selfing, isolation, rumination, burnout 
- Quieting the mind, attention and concentration 
- Disidentification with thoughts and emotions 
- Broadening of attention 
- Increased connections to others and world 
- Positive emotions and self compassion 
- Improved outlook 



# IMPROVEMENTS WITH 8 WEEKS MBSR TRAINING

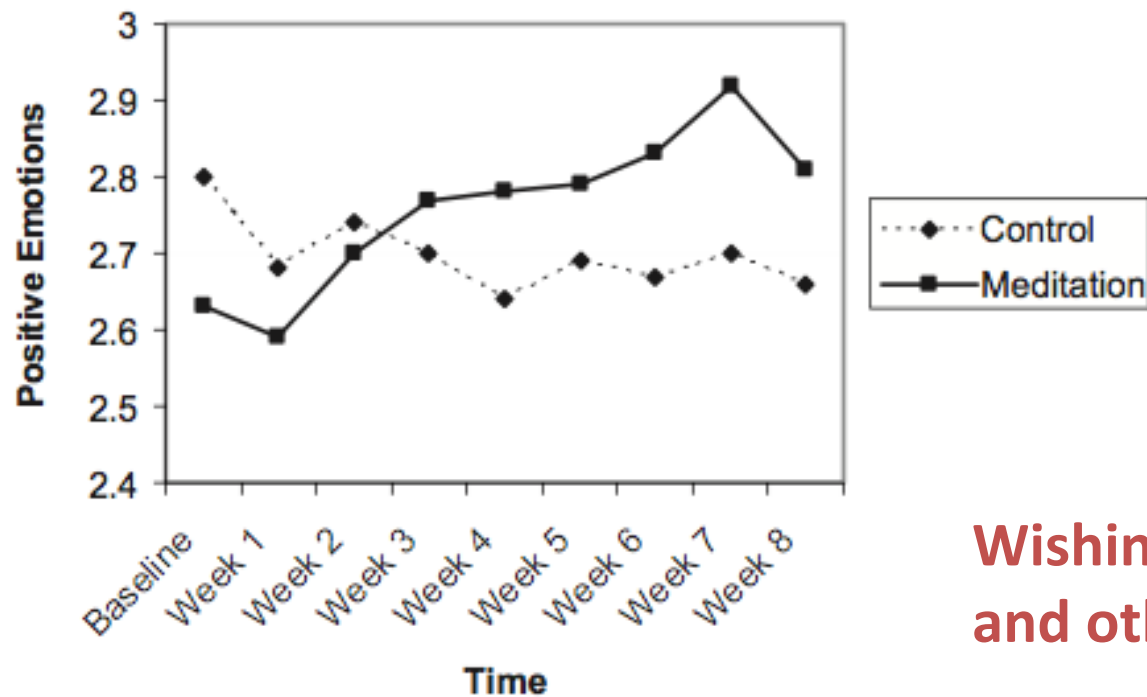
- Mindfulness
- Burnout (all scales)
- Empathy
- Physician Belief Scale
- Mood disturbance
- Personality stability



P<.001



# Mindfulness Practice and Emotional State



**Wishing yourself  
and others well!**

# Stress and Medical Malpractice: Organizational Risk Assessment and Intervention

S

John W. Jones and Bruce N. Barge  
The St. Paul Companies  
St. Paul, Minnesota

Brian D. Steffy  
Industrial Relations Center  
University of Minnesota

Lisa M. Fay, Lisa K. Kunz, and Lisa J. Wuebker  
The St. Paul Fire and Marine Insurance Company  
St. Paul, Minnesota

*Subscales and Representative Items From the Human Factors Inventory*

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61 hospitals

12,000 individuals

Subscale and item

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## Job Stress

- I experience too much pressure on my job.
- Do you feel fatigued during the workday?
- Has worrying about your job been interfering with your sleep?

## Job Dissatisfaction

- I am very satisfied with my job. (R)
- I am paid adequately for what I do. (R)
- Do you feel your work environment is stimulating? (R)

## Organizational Stress

- The work in my department is well organized. (R)
- My department is understaffed.
- Staff turnover is high in my department.

## Personal Stress

- Have you borrowed more than \$20,000 in the last year?
  - Has a close family member become seriously ill or injured in the last year?
  - Have you obtained a new job in the last year?
- 

Workplace stress correlates with number of malpractice claims. ( $p < .001$ )

Jones & Barge,  
J Appl Psych, 73(4)  
1988, 727-735

# Stress Reduction and Malpractice

*Descriptive Statistics: Malpractice Claims Frequency Compared by Year and Experimental Group*

Hospital group	1985			1986		
	Frequency	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Frequency	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Control	36	1.64	1.81	35	1.59	2.17
Experimental	31	1.41	1.44	9	0.41	0.67

*Note.* 1985:  $t(21) = 1.16$ , ns. 1986:  $t(21) = 2.89$ ,  $p < .01$ .

Jones & Barge,  
J Appl Psych, 73(4)  
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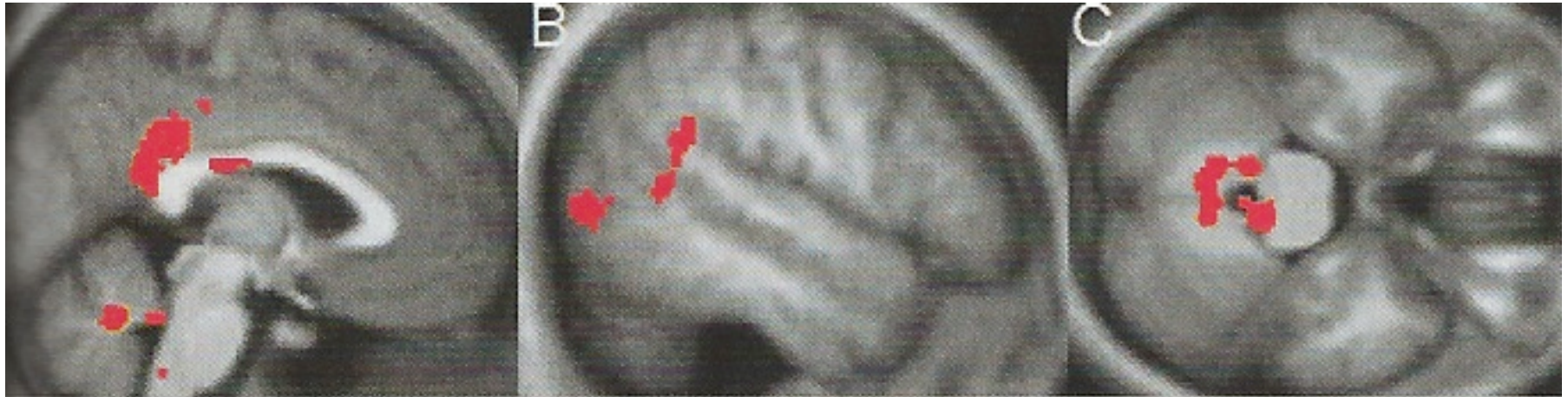
# Stress Management and Medication Errors

GROUP	ERRORS/MONTH
BEFORE INTERVENTION	10.25 ±3.45
AFTER INTERVENTION	5.14± 3.45*

\*P=.02

Jones & Barge,  
J Appl Psych, 73(4)  
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# Effect MBSR On Grey Matter



*Areas that showed increase in gray matter concentration following eight weeks of mindfulness-based stress reduction.*

*A: posterior cingulate cortex and cerebellum,*

*B: temporo-parietal junction,*

*C: cerebellum and brain stem.*

I DON'T  
LIKE THE  
LOOK OF  
THIS.



**Basic Assumption of Medicine:**  
**People perform better and are  
happier when they are mentally  
and physically healthy.**

**Medical staff are people.**



# PRIORITIES HOSPITAL AND INDIVIDUAL STAFF

- PATIENT CARE
- FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY
- RESEARCH/EDUCATION
- *PROVIDER WELLNESS*
  - *PHYSICAL*
  - *MENTAL*





# The Take Home Message

**“It’s like Peter Pan-if you lose the fun, you can’t fly.”**

**Nate Robinson**



# Practicing Paying Attention

