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General Meeting
Wednesday, March 6th
7:00 p.m. Koldus 111

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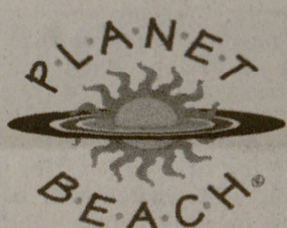
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Sci|Tech

THE BATTALION

Tuesday, March 5, 2002

Gulf affected by human use A&M scientists working to counter human effects

By Jesse Stephenson
THE BATTALION

The Gulf of Mexico is suffering from the effects of human use and activity, but measures are being taken to remedy the situation, according to scientists in the College of Geosciences at Texas A&M University.

The gulf is affected a great deal by oil and gas production, said Dr. Ian MacDonald of the College of Geosciences Geochemical and Environmental Research Group (GERG).

"The gulf is heavily exploited," MacDonald said. "Off-shore production originated in the gulf, and the first structure was built in 1947. Today, the gulf houses more structures per capita than most other coastlines.

"There are probably more platforms along this coastline in our exclusive economic zone than there are along any other comparable stretch," MacDonald said.

The zone comprises 200 miles from shore out to sea and is the limit of national sovereignty with respect to fisheries and mineral rights.

One of the major problems concerning oil and gas production in the Gulf of Mexico is leakage of oil from the platforms. These problems are difficult to document, MacDonald said, but government agencies are doing a good job of controlling the problem. MacDonald said one of the positives has been the establishment of

national sanctuaries.

"In a roundabout way, the platforms sometimes serve as an aid to some bird species," MacDonald said. "If migrating birds are facing strong headwinds, they sometimes seek refuge on the structures. Ordinarily, these birds would not survive the journey."

"The oceans are in trouble, fisheries are crashing everywhere in the world; there is serious concern about coral reefs."

— Dr. Ian MacDonald
Texas A&M College of Geosciences

However, the waters are by no means safe.

"The oceans are in trouble," MacDonald said. "Fisheries are crashing everywhere in the world; there is serious concern about coral reefs."

MacDonald said some of the solutions include regulating more vigorously and giving more money to the agencies that enforce those regulations.

Doctors too tired to help patients

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Three out of four medical residents in a University of Washington study report suffering from "burnout" and half of those said they sometimes gave less-than-ideal care.

Too little sleep, frequent shifts longer than 24 hours and lack of leisure time were most often rated as major stresses by residents in the university's internal medicine residency program.

Dr. Anthony Back, a University of Washington medical professor and one of the authors of the study, said the research did not determine whether patient care was affected.

But according to the study in Tuesday's Annals of Internal Medicine, slightly more than half the residents experiencing burnout reported one or more "suboptimal" patient care practices at least monthly, compared with about 21 percent of residents not experiencing burnout.

Such practices included residents making treatment or medication errors "not due to a lack of knowledge of inexperience," failing to fully discuss treatment options and answer patient questions and discharging

patients "because the team was too busy."

Doctors generally serve one year as an intern and train for three years as a resident following graduation from medical school.

Dr. Julia Gore, chief resident at the Veterans Affairs hospital in the University of Washington system, called the study a "snapshot" that does not fully describe the experience.

"Sure, there definitely were times when I felt really tired and probably would say burned out," said Gore, in her third year as a resident. "After a few days off or after moving onto a different rotation, my response would be completely different."

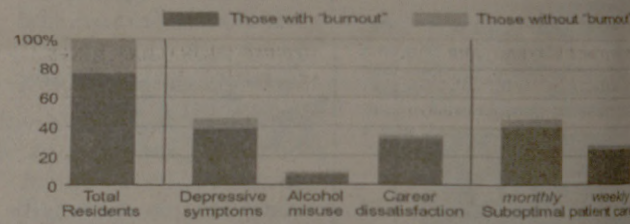
Even when fatigued, Gore said, she felt "very supported" by other residents and the attending physician on duty.

Another article in the journal said about a third of 4,130 residents surveyed nationwide reported four or five symptoms of depression.

The survey, by the Resident Services Committee of the Association of Program Directors in Internal Medicine, concluded that increased cynicism and symptoms of depression were associated with educational debt.

Medical residents burn out

A study of 115 young doctors shows that the majority of them suffer from "burnout," a syndrome of depersonalization, emotional exhaustion and a sense of low personal accomplishment. Residents who reported these symptoms and behaviors also said they sometimes gave suboptimal patient care.



Doctors in debt

Almost 20 percent of doctors have over \$100,000 in student loans while completing their residency.

Educational debt	42.7%	10.9%	23.2%	18.0%
\$0-4,999				
\$5,000-19,999				
\$20,000-49,999				
\$50,000-99,999				
Over \$100,000				

Burning in the red

A separate questionnaire shows that a substantial number of residents have had financial struggles that could have interfered with training.

All residents	Second year through fifth year residents
19.5% Credit card debt over \$3,000	52% Cannot afford books and equipment
43.1% Disposable monthly income less than \$100	29% Cannot afford required fees for certifying exam
16% Cannot afford safe housing	33% Work moonlighting jobs

SOURCE: Annals of Internal Medicine

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Texas A&M faculty, staff and administrators helping students.

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The AT Mentors Program consists of approximately 370 Texas A&M faculty, staff, and administrators who volunteer extra office hours to make themselves available to students. Mentors names will be appearing in the Battalion throughout the week.

For more information on these and other Mentors check out the AT Mentors website at: <http://mentors.tamu.edu>

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