Title: Speaking Up for Students: How to Recognize and Address Mistreatment by Patients

Submission Type: Sessions on Medical Education

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Topic Short Description: Harassment and mistreatment by patients are common experiences in medicine, especially among women and ethnic minorities. At our institution, students not infrequently report having witnessed or experienced mistreatment by patients. A recent national survey suggests that nearly 60% of physicians report having heard biased comments by patients. Such experiences can have a significant psychological impact. Students and faculty alike have expressed desire for training on how to respond to such encounters in the clinical setting.

Presenters: Kali Cyrus, MD; Kirsten Wilkins, MD

Facilitator: Matthew Goldenberg, MD, MSc

Learning Objectives: 1. Discuss the prevalence and impact of mistreatment by patients on trainees in the learning environment. 2. Describe the role of supervisors and the institution in monitoring and responding to mistreatment of trainees by patients, and identify potential barriers to this process. 3. Apply at least three practical strategies for responding to mistreatment of trainees.

Session Plan: In this interactive workshop, faculty presenters will begin with a brief overview of the prevalence and impact of mistreatment of trainees and physicians by patients. Presenters will engage participants in “buzz group” discussions of barriers to addressing this common experience. Next, they will introduce and demonstrate a novel framework (“ERASE”) for preparing for and addressing these incidents: 1) Expect such events will happen and prepare accordingly, 2) Recognize the mistreatment, 3) Address the problem in real time, 4) Support the learner after the event, and 5) Encourage a positive culture. Participants will be provided with sample cases of trainee mistreatment by patients and suggested strategies for response. Finally, participants will engage in interactive role plays to practice applying these strategies. Workshop leaders will then facilitate a large group skill demonstration and discussion.