

Report: July The Worst Time of Year to Be Sick



National Try-Not-to-Get-Sick Month

BOSTON, MA - A recent study demonstrated that [July](#), the busiest time of year for [teaching hospitals](#), was also the worst time of the year to be sick. Medication errors and [mortality](#) rates [skyrocket](#) to over 100% over most other months.

Patient and longtime smoker, Janine Edmunson, was very disappointed her [COPD](#) exacerbation wasn't "a week earlier." Edmunson said, "You mean I missed June by only a couple of days? Ahhh, dammit. I knew I shouldn't have smoked 3 packs yesterday." Edmunson has been a chain smoker for years, which has given her the opportunity to be very familiar with resident physician's patterns.

Edmunson will be woken up at 4:30 a.m. to start her morning off with four to five full [physicals](#) complete with upper and lower extremity reflex testing, followed by a detailed description of her disease. "Yup, I hear same chapter in [Robbins](#) every year, then followed by a valiant effort to get me to quit smoking."

Edmunson goes on to report, "Sometimes I like to mess with the [interns](#) by giving a completely different [medical history](#) when they come back in with their attending. The look on those fresh 'terns' face is priceless. It's the only way I can stay sane in the hospital in [July](#)."

Every year on July 1st, new residents and intern physicians start work, easily spotted as they have the [cleanest white coats](#) with fresh creases. Typically the more books and papers in their pockets, the newer the house staff. They are looking up doses of [Tylenol](#), docusate, and other over-the-counter medications on

Epocrates and [Google](#).

[Interns](#), as they are referred to, are seen scurrying around carrying clipboards containing their patients' records, hiding in the halls practicing their "rounds" presentations, and often suggesting obscure testing (Lyme disease) while missing the obvious culprit (cellulitis).

Pharmacists dread July like a medical student dreads doing a [rectal exam](#). "I have to hire 4 telephone operators in order to continually call new interns regarding prescription errors," says pharmacist Chuck Boders.

"You can forget about timely discharge orders and [summaries](#)," says nurse Daniel Rogers. "It takes 40 minutes for them to write their SOAP notes. Discharge orders? Count on another 3 hours."

"I would never get sick in [July](#)," said Chief of Surgery Dr. Roncolli. "Please, if possible wait until August to come in to this [zoo](#)."