Are Medical Residents Dangerously Fatigue?

USA
February 2013

Cause Mapping is a Root Cause Analysis method that captures basic cause-and-effect relationships supported with evidence.

CAUSE MAPPING
Problem Solving • Incident Investigation • Root Cause Analysis

Step 1 **Problem** What's the
Step 2 **Analysis** Why did it
Step 3 **Solutions** What will

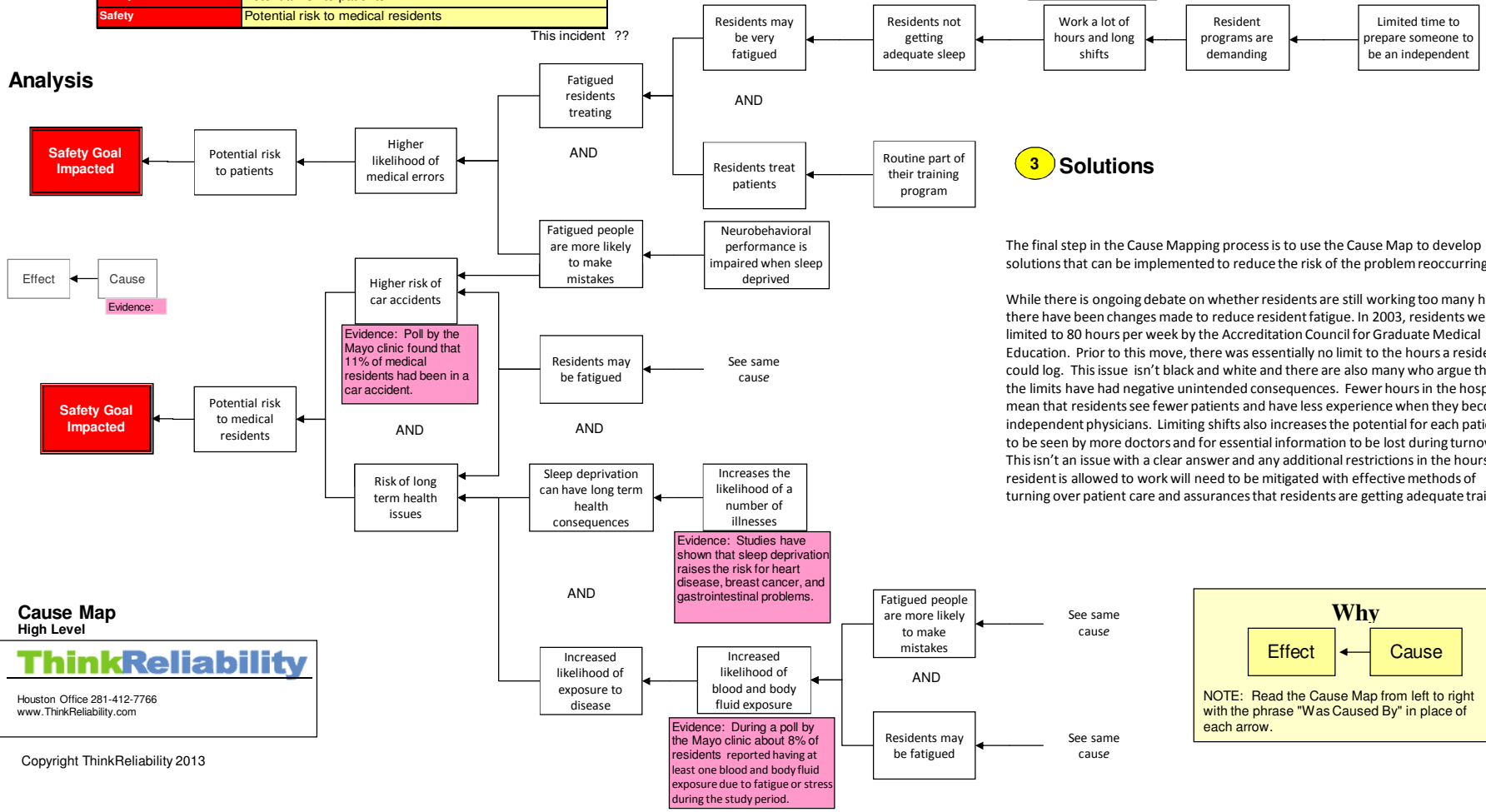
1 Problem

What	Problem(s)	Fatigued medical residents, concerns about potential for medical errors
When	Date	Ongoing
	Differences	??
Where	Physical Location	USA (Other countries have different regulations)
Impact to the Goals		
Safety		Potential risk to patients
Safety		Potential risk to medical residents

Medical residents work extremely long, tiring schedules on their arduous path to becoming physicians. Possible consequences of this demanding schedule have long been debated. Many wonder if it's safe to have someone who has been on duty for 24 hours straight treating patients.

This incident ??

2 Analysis



3 Solutions

The final step in the Cause Mapping process is to use the Cause Map to develop solutions that can be implemented to reduce the risk of the problem reoccurring.

While there is ongoing debate on whether residents are still working too many hours, there have been changes made to reduce resident fatigue. In 2003, residents were limited to 80 hours per week by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education. Prior to this move, there was essentially no limit to the hours a resident could log. This issue isn't black and white and there are also many who argue that the limits have had negative unintended consequences. Fewer hours in the hospital mean that residents see fewer patients and have less experience when they become independent physicians. Limiting shifts also increases the potential for each patient to be seen by more doctors and for essential information to be lost during turnovers. This isn't an issue with a clear answer and any additional restrictions in the hours a resident is allowed to work will need to be mitigated with effective methods of turning over patient care and assurances that residents are getting adequate training.

Cause Map
High Level

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Why

Effect ← Cause

NOTE: Read the Cause Map from left to right with the phrase "Was Caused By" in place of each arrow.