

SAQ 24

You are doing the roster as a consultant in a tertiary hospital ED. Your director tells you that the ED medical staff take 25% more sick leave than any other department in the hospital and asks that you look into ways of reducing the level and impact of sick leave on your department.

(12 points total, approximately 6 minutes)

- **What data or information would help you in this task (4 points)?**
- Sick leave by- day of week vs weekends, day vs evening vs night shift.
- Sick leave by individuals- eg one individual with a single year long absence
- Compare to other years
- Compare to other emergency departments
- Strategies attempted in the past
- Strategies used by other ED's
- Strategies used and funded in your hospital/health department
- Turn-over rates, unfilled EFT
- Staff satisfaction data

- What factors might increase sick leave amongst emergency department medical staff? (4 points)
- Poor morale
- Rostering- support, supervision levels, flexibility, ease of swaps, frequency of anti-social shifts, sleep cycles
- Leave arrangements and flexibility
- Stress- ED violence and level of support, work load, support and supervision, KPI pressure
- Drug and alcohol use
- Smoking rates
- Obesity/fitness
- Influenza vaccination rates
- Infection control- hand hygiene
- Lack of “enforcement”- monitoring of sick leave certificates
- Reduced child care access

- What strategies might minimize the **impact** (not the level) of sick leave (4 points)
- Locum use
- On call roster-own staff
- Additional staffing levels
- Alternative staffing eg nurse practitioners
- Flexible use of consultant non clinical time- csll in from offices
- Use of non ED staff eg overnight medical reg
- Call back systems- group SMS sends to bank doctors
- Policies on notification- who to call and when, advanced warning to allow for replacement
- (all of these have budget/logistic/privacy issues!)

- The answers and levels of information needed are not high, and there is a large variation of answers deemed acceptable, therefore I would expect the borderline candidate to score 8/12.
- Your challenge is to beat the borderline candidate.

Main problems

- Two points that were too similar eg drug and then second point alcohol
- Writing the same point twice
- Only varying answers by small amounts (sorry, my attempt at humour)
- Not reading the question properly- part 3 is about reducing the **impact** not the level
- Making suggestion that might cause harm eg calling all staff and asking why they were on sick leave- might get the response “none of your business” and effect morale therefore increase sick leave.
- Using vague terms- the biggest problem. In section 1 many people wrote - “morale” as a single word answer. Morale is not data. Staff satisfaction surveys or retention rates or unfilled EFT is.
- You have access to to the ED sick leave rates and rest of hospital rates- not many points for simply asking for these again.
- Running out of time. Many of you scored 0/12 by not writing anything.