

How Many Times Have You Done This Procedure, Doc?

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Questions such as this from proactive, increasingly knowledgeable patients place a physician on the horns of an ethical dilemma. Although fellows are closely supervised and trained under a gradually increasing responsibility principle (based upon subjective evaluation), a time will come when there is no one available to back you up in the catheterization lab.

Fact: Someone has to be a physician's first case of any given type. However, no one really wants to be that person.

Access to extensive medical information on the web has satiated some of our patient's desire for information and expectations regarding medical procedures, which is a good thing. However, increased transparency and public awareness of medical errors has opened up a Pandora's box regarding a physician's skill level and experience. The September 2012 issue of *Men's Health* went as far as publishing peer reviewed data regarding the minimum numbers for particular procedures taken directly from medical journals. Specifically, coronary angioplasty and angiography minimums were reported as 50 and 82 procedures respectively.

Take home message: Hard numbers to meet your first month into fellowship.

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