

The weekend: a bad time to get sick

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Imagine if you were at the beach for the weekend and you get an asthma attack. Your parents rush you to the emergency room. But, did you know that your mortality rate has shot up 27% for going to the hospital on a weekend.

This is called the 'weekend effect', the weekend effect is when mortality rates increase on the weekend in comparison the weekday. The questions that makes many doctors scratch their heads is 'why does the weekend effect occur?'. The answer is complex and is currently being studied worldwide. Many believe that the weekend effect occurs due to lack of quality care. Many residents and less experienced staff take up the weekend shifts.

Less experienced staff results in a longer period of time to diagnose patients and give them the proper tests and medication. Others, however believe that the weekend effect is bias and it is just a myth. Many professionals tend to believe that it is just patients that are more sick on the weekend in comparison to the weekday. When looking at many research studies conducted throughout the nation and worldwide all seem to have the common trend of increased mortality on the weekend. Some countries have different days as their weekend however on those days mortality increase up to 27%. Johns Hopkins has been studying this issue along many of its residents and many have come to see that teaching hospitals tend to have high mortalities in comparison to non teaching hospitals.

The answer to the weekend effect remains a mystery and no one knows what can be done to minimise it.