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Unprofessional physician behavior

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We reviewed evaluations of 727 physicians, from almost every US state that were conducted at the Vanderbilt Comprehensive Assessment Program. VCAP evaluations are conducted over 2-4 days by a multidisciplinary team that adheres to the American Psychiatric Association guidelines for conducting fitness for duty evaluations of physicians. After 2009, when The Joint Commission Sentinel Event Alert 40 (Behaviors that undermine a culture of safety) was implemented, referred physicians were older (median age, 52 vs 48 years, adjusted $p=0.02$). More were seen for disruptive behavior and fewer for sexual boundary violations (adjusted $p<.0001$). Diagnoses of cognitive disorders were more prevalent (9% vs 2%, adjusted $p<.01$) but sexual disorders and personality disorders occurred less frequently (both adjusted $p<.001$). Disruptive referrals, compared to those referred for other reasons, had more personality trait difficulties rather than severe personality diagnoses (adjusted $p<.0001$) but fewer diagnoses of anxiety (adjusted $p=0.016$), mood (adjusted $p=0.008$), or substance use disorders (adjusted $p<.0001$). The disruptive referrals were more likely found to be fit to practice. Less easily explained is the significant decline in referrals for sexual boundary violations, which may suggest additional culture changes within Healthcare Organizations, perhaps associated with growth in the proportion of women practicing medicine.

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