

Change in the incidence of
lapses in professionalism:
What are we doing right?

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Spectrum of Professionalism

Lapses

■ *Medical students*

- **Lapses:** Cheating, failure to meet responsibilities, inappropriate interactions, substance use
- **Consequences:** Discussion with dean, committee censure, probation, remediation, dismissal

■ *Residents/fellows*

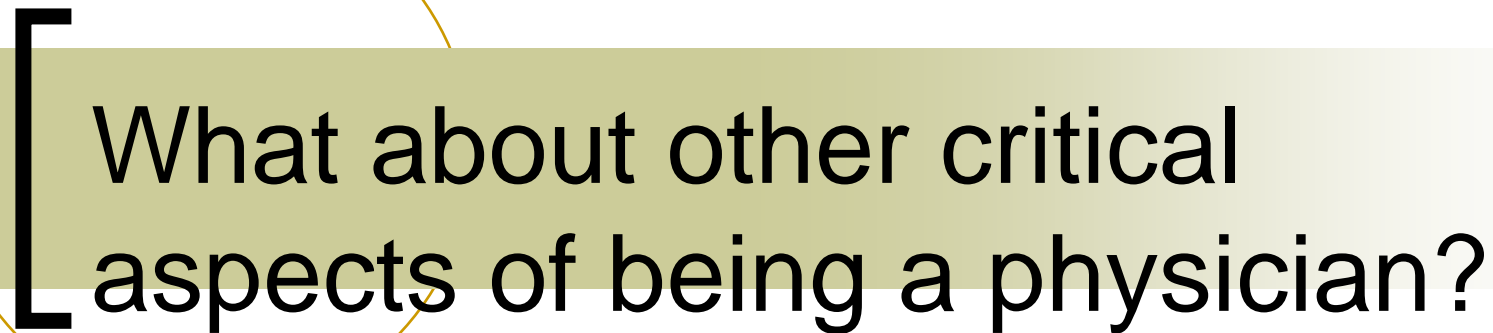
- **Lapses:** Fraudulent charting, failure to meet responsibilities, inappropriate interactions, substance use
- **Consequences:** Discussion with program director or chair, probation, remediation, dismissal



How can medical schools track
any kind of educational outcome?

Knowledge/Clinical Skills Outcomes of Medical Education

- Student scores on national exams
 - Step I USMLE
 - Step II USMLE
 - Step III USMLE
- Student scores relative to entering MCAT's
- Percentage of students passing Step II Clinical Skills exam on first attempt



What about other critical
aspects of being a physician?

How do our graduates
demonstrate their
professionalism?

Medical Professionalism: 2007

- Adopted by the Accreditation Council on Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) in 1999 as one of 6 ‘competencies’
- Components delineated by AAMC/NBME
 - Altruism
 - Caring/compassion/communication
 - Excellence
 - Honor/Integrity
 - Leadership
 - Responsibility/Accountability

The Other End of the Spectrum: Professionalism lapses in practicing physicians

- Substance Use
- Inappropriate interpersonal interactions/Unprofessional conduct
- Failure to meet responsibilities/standard of practice violations

[State Boards of Medical Examiners]

- 51 separate boards, including District of Columbia
- Board actions are matters of public record
- Relative number of actions/active licensed physician also known for each state
- Record of disciplinary actions available for decades
- Each board differs in definitions, however

The purpose of the present study was to monitor the educational outcomes of a single medical school....

...by tracking medical board disciplinary actions in the same state

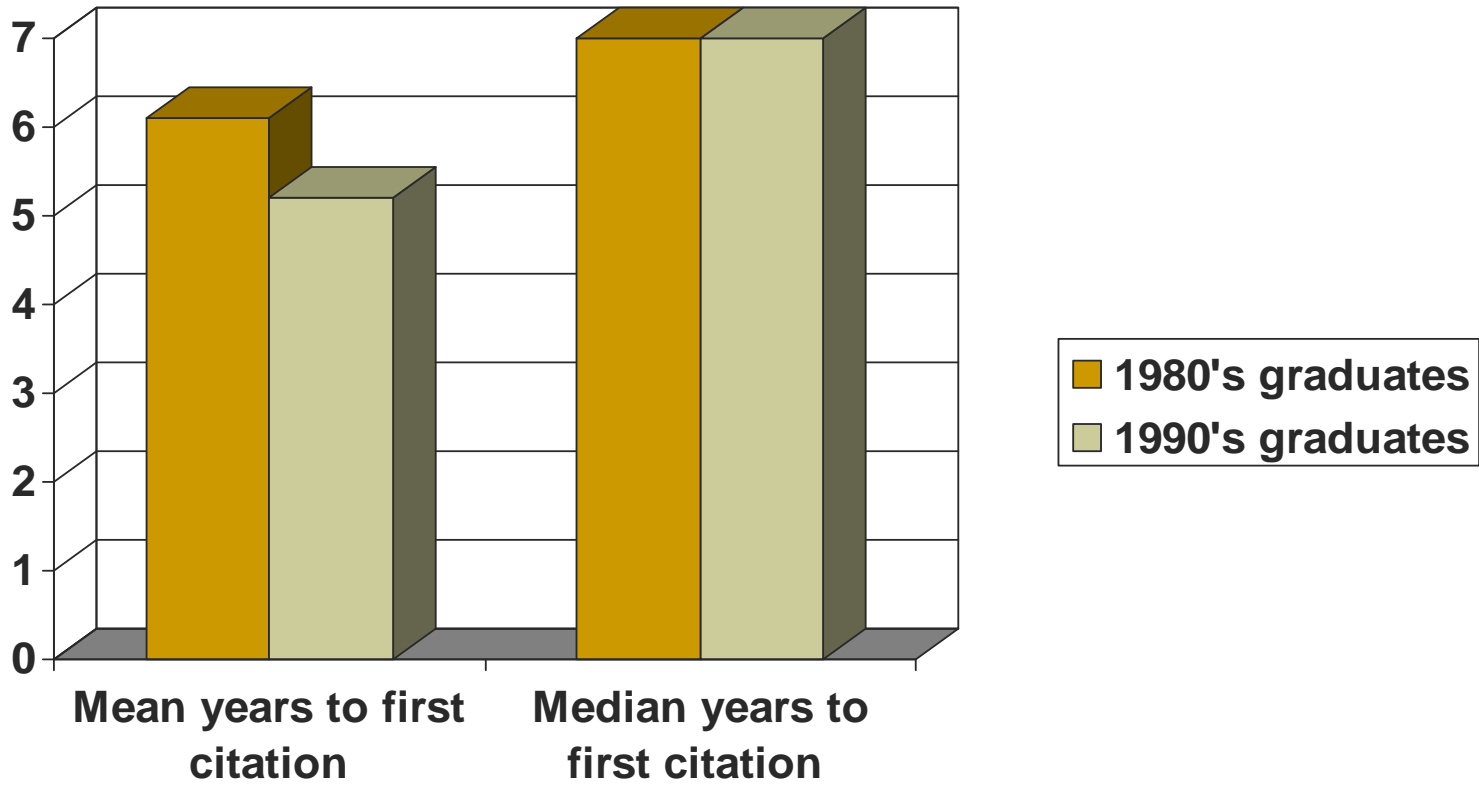
[Methods]

- Midwestern state with ~ 3 million people
- Single allopathic medical school with ~ 150 graduates annually
- ~ 50% of each class licensed in state
- 15 years worth of disciplinary actions tracked for each of two cohorts
 - Substance use/prescription issues
 - Behavior (anger, boundary issues)
 - Irresponsibility/standard of practice violations

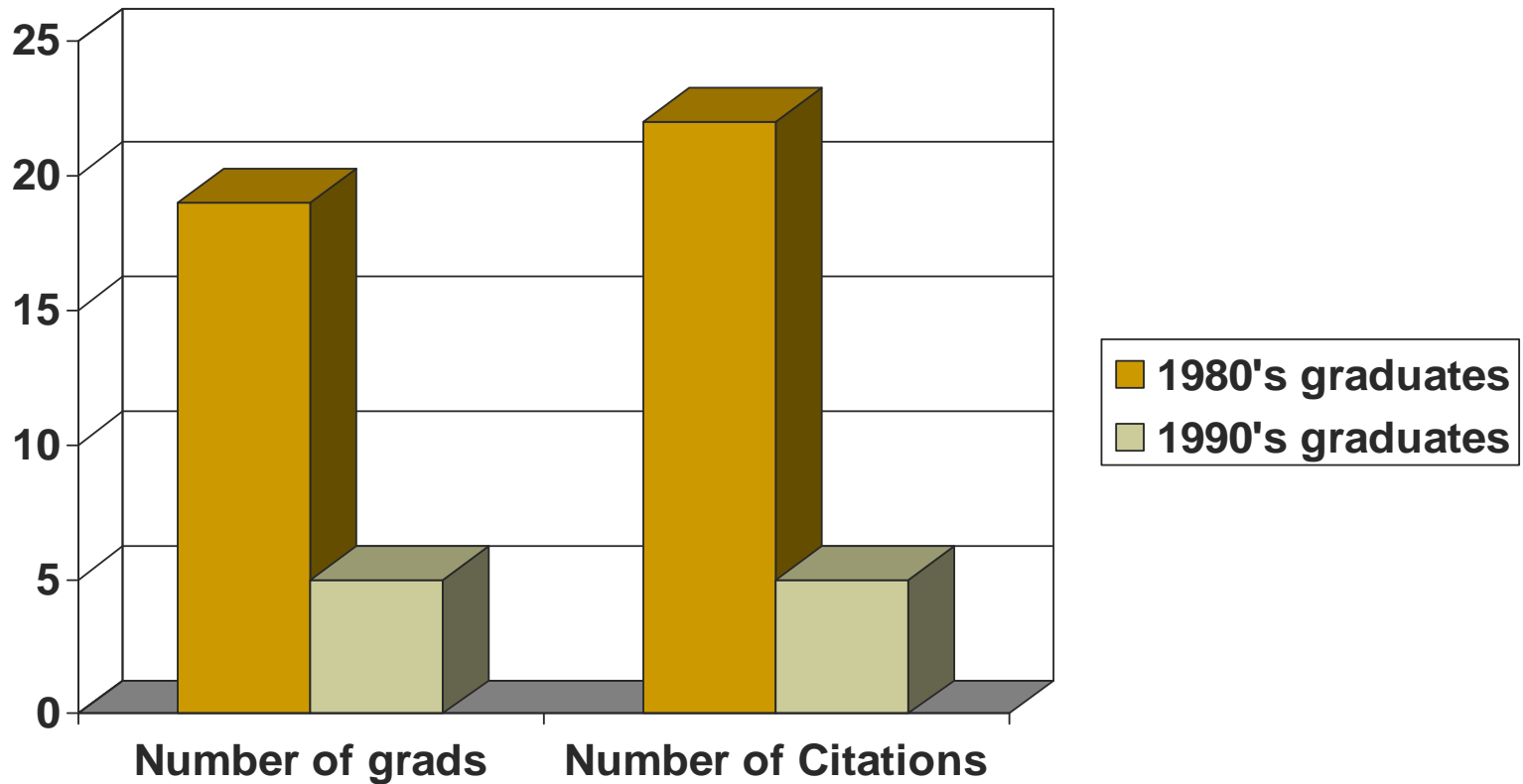
[Populations]

- Graduates from 1980-1989
 - Tracked 1980-1995
- Graduates from 1990-1999
 - Tracked 1990-2005

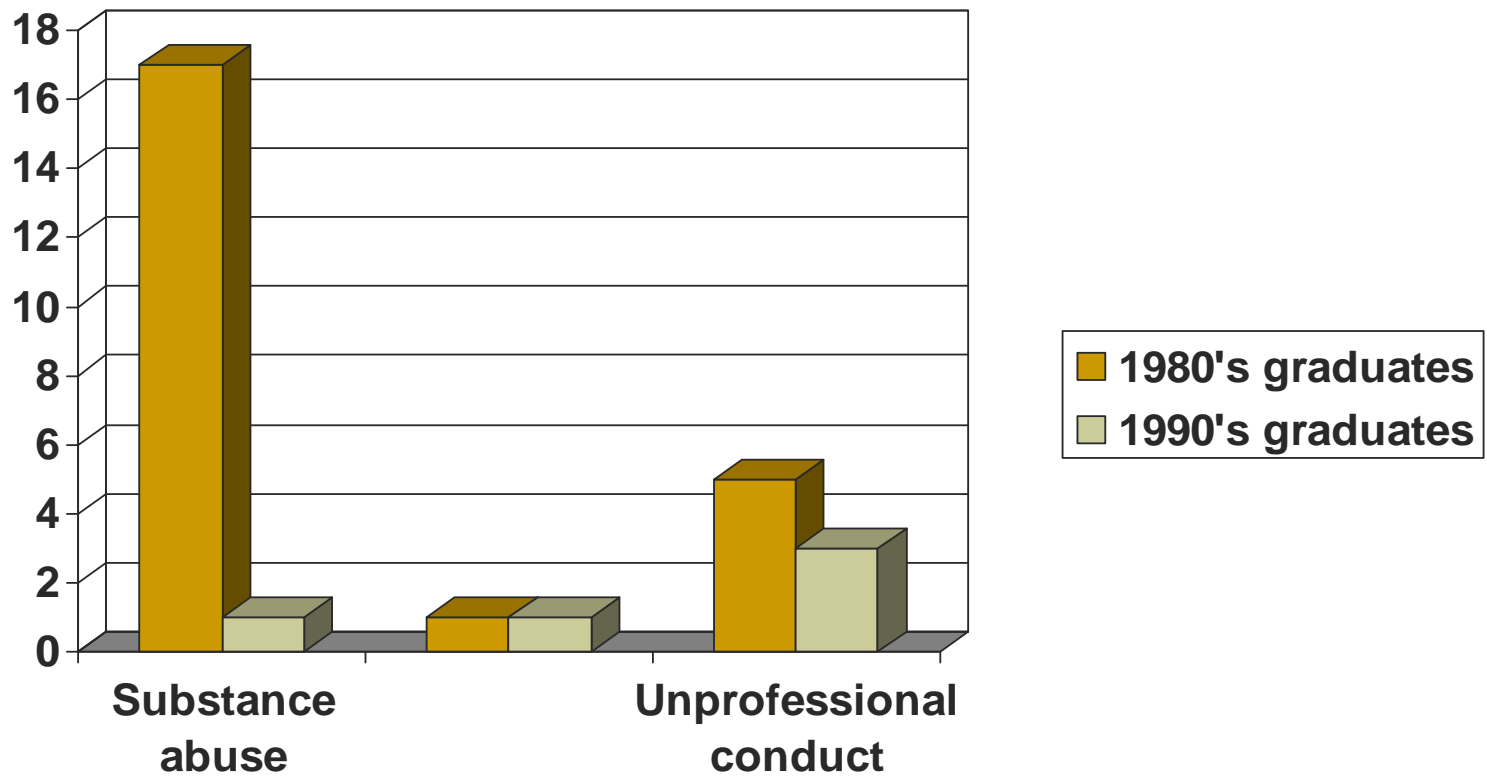
[Years to first citation]



[# of Graduates; # of Citations]



[Types of Citations]



What happened after 10 years?

- 1980's
 - 19 grads with 22 citations < 10 years out
 - 35 grads with 45 citations now
- 1990's
 - 5 grads with 5 citations initially
 - 6 grads with 6 citations now

What other data address professional lapses over time?

- Khaliq AA et al. Disciplinary action against physicians: Who is likely to get disciplined? Am J Med 2005 188:773-7
 - < 10 years 1.3%
 - < 20 years 2.8%
 - < 30 years 4.3%
 - < 40 years 6.6%
 - < 50 years 8.5%

How stringent is the Iowa board?

- Ranking for serious disciplinary actions over last 10 years
 - #12/51 for 2004
 - Range 2-13 for last decade
- Ranking for Oklahoma (Khaliq et al. data)
 - #5/51 for 2004
 - Range 3-7 for last decade

[Summary]

- Disciplinary actions against graduates seem to be a valid educational outcome
- Disciplinary actions are particularly relevant to competency in professionalism
- Our school's 1990's graduates had:
 - only 1/3 the number of people disciplined
 - only 1/4 the number of citations (compared to the 1980's graduates)

[What are we doing right?]

- An ethics curriculum was introduced in 1989
- Interviews returned in early 1990's
- A state program for impaired physicians was launched in 1996
 - but 80's grads continued to have first and repeat substance use citations, while 90's grads didn't
- Societal tolerance for substance use, temper tantrums, etc. may have decreased

Many Important Questions Remain

- Are other states seeing decreased citations in their recent medical school graduates?
- Do other states confirm Khaliq et al.'s data re citations and time from graduation?
- Is substance use in particular decreasing among physicians?