Too Many Patients?


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**Question:** I know a single family physician who sees at least 100 patients a day and has at times seen 145 patients per day. How many patients are too many? Is there some kind of regulation on how many patients a single physician can see per day?

**Answer:** That's a great question. We are constantly encouraging physicians to see more and more patients, but there must be a breaking point. I struggle with this issue, because I have seen some physicians literally maxed out at 20 patients, while there are others who easily sail through 60 patients a day — yet the busier physician's patients are typically more satisfied! Some of it has to do with maximizing the time with the patient; the physician is simply more efficient.

Practices with low phone triage tend to have higher productivity as well because they are seeing those "easy" visits in person instead of handling them on the phones.

All this said, your description of 145 patients leaves me to wonder if this physician has gone too far. However, there is no specific regulation. The risk the physician takes is making a mistake because he's going too fast and ending up with a malpractice case.

**Disclosures:**

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