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Attire

I'm tired of all this nonsense about beauty being only skin-deep. That's deep enough. What do you want, an adorable pancreas?

—JEAN KERR

Dress codes are institution-specific, which means that most institutions have a dress code, but it is usually non-specific. Dress nicely, appropriately, and professionally. Most likely you will begin your career by dressing very sharply, and you will certainly impress everyone, even your fellow slovenly dressed interns and residents (and some attendings). After a short period of time, you will see exactly what you can get away with, and in an effort to make your life easier, you will “sink” to the unwritten, house-staff invented, less than crisp, form of attire. A chief, attending, or hospital administrator would prefer nothing more than to see his or her house staff appearing very professional. This simply means a clean shirt or blouse, nice tie or simple jewelry, clean white coat, shined shoes (not clogs or sandals) and socks. Regardless of how your attendings and the chief are dressed, this is the way you should dress.

Dressing for your new station in life can often divert unwanted attention away from other inadequacies. Why not take every opportunity to impress your superiors? It does not take much effort, and it will reassure your patients



Mentored

Not Mentored

of your professional competence. You may even impress yourself with how well you clean up, and it could very well even start a positive trend among your fellow workers.

A word about grooming should not have to be said at this point, but we have seen too many ungroomed or poorly groomed house staff walking the hospital wards lately. This seems to be a holdover from medical school days. It is very noticeable and does not impress anyone. Comb your hair. Have your hair groomed regularly. If you have facial hair (beard, goatee, etc.), then it should appear neat. Better yet, do not wear it. Keep your face shaved. If you were on call the night before and must visit patients in the morning, then wake up 3 minutes earlier and shave. Get your teeth cleaned regularly; nobody likes to see your winning smile with a mouth full of tartar. Keep your fingernails trimmed and clean at all times. Patients and patient's families often pay attention to the fingernails of physicians, especially if that physician is a surgeon.

Scrubs should not be worn in the street. Some institutions turn a blind eye to this practice, and some absolutely forbid it. Not only does it raise the question of the cleanliness of the operating room environment, but you will actually start to walk into the operating room with those same street scrubs. Conversely, you could be accused of spreading hospital germs to the public on the street. It only takes one minute to change your clothes. For obvious reasons, do not wear scrubs at home. If you must walk out of the operating suite with scrubs on, you must wear a white lab coat. Never walk out of the operating room with a mask, cap, or booties. It does not impress anyone.

As mentioned previously, wear clean pants, clean shirt of any color, and (if you are male) a necktie in the hospital. A white lab coat is preferred; however, it must always be clean. Always wear socks. Absolutely no sandals

are allowed. If you have been called to the chief's office, wear a blue or black blazer.

The same scrub rules apply to women in every instance. The same white lab coat, a skirt or a long dress is definitely acceptable in place of pants. A pants suit can take the place of a white lab coat. No visible body piercing, except for 1 or 2 ear piercings, and, of course, only those body piercings as mandated by religious customs.

You dressed well for your interview for this position. Consider every day of your life as an interview.