

COFFEE HABITS OF PSYCHIATRIC RESIDENTS



CFG RESIDENCY OUTREACH RESOURCE LIBRARY

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IS THERE SOMETHING MORE THAN JUST THE CAFFEINE ALONE THAT COMPELS A RESIDENT TO FREQUENT A FAVORITE COFFEE SHOP, OR TO BECOME EFFICIENT AT HOME-BREWING DESPITE A BUSY SCHEDULE?

By Ted Costa

Is coffee in the workday a necessary commodity? Or do you think it more like a daily phenomenon of experience? The lines are blurred for me, and they're especially blurred depending on how many cups of coffee I've had in the morning (after 3 cups, things get a bit fuzzy).

Coffee is considered to be the #1 consumed hot drink of the entire world. We know for sure that there's an endless amount to talk about logistics, supply, and demand, growing regions and seasons, etc. But what about the more intangible qualities of coffee that are more likely the causes for why we head for the pot in the morning, and then again in the afternoon, and sometimes even after dinner.

Well, those reasons, too, seem to be endless depending on whom you ask. Today, we put our focus on physicians finishing up their psychiatry residency. Is there something more than just the caffeine alone that compels a Resident to frequent a favorite coffee shop, or to become efficient at home-brewing despite a busy schedule? And here we begin to dive into the details by asking a few Residents. I spoke to a couple of Psychiatry Residents in the Philadelphia area. They shared some coffee habits, and as always, the fun is in the details.

DID CONSUMPTION INCREASE WHEN YOU BECAME A DOCTOR?

At what age did you have your first cup? Although my Italian family was serving my first cup around 5 years old, these Residents started their love of coffee between 12 and 18.

Did consumption increase when you became a doctor? Although the response was mixed with either staying the same and increasing, it was clear that no coffee consumption decreased when one chose to be in the medical profession. *What did decrease among these doctors? Sugar!*

It was interesting that some doctors exclusively brew at home, considering the amount of time doctors spend at the hospital. *Was coffee for pleasure or necessity?* Answers favored necessity. Residents can have long, unpredictable hours. Coffee is “necessary, especially for long days”. However, pleasure does take a very important part in the rare days Residents have a day off and take a moment for their own mental health. Some actually use this time absorbing brew methods of their own.

Do you drink coffee alone, or is it ever a shared experience with friends or family? Does your residency group ever take a break or get together over coffee? Our participating Residents drink coffee primarily alone. However, coffee among colleagues is still popular for a much-needed break between patients or training. Oftentimes, it helps break up the day by actually getting out to a coffee shop. Residents who home-brew said it actually helps with connection to other colleagues who have this similar interest!

Favorite place for coffee? The answers varied but somehow seemed sweetly and oddly meditative. “I love the complexity and different ways to drink/brew/enjoy coffee. I certainly started to go down the rabbit hole of watching videos online about brewing at home when residency started and now connect with a few other residents who have similarly found this to be a new hobby. My favorite place to enjoy coffee is outside in the yard in the morning with my dog.” Now who could argue with a man, his dog, and his coffee?! Another honest response, “[Coffee] helps me stay awake, energetic, and focused. It's like a benign stimulant. I usually drink coffee at work, currently at home while working remotely.” Having a reliable source of energy at the fingertips throughout the day... that's dependability where it's needed!

It was a lot of fun to dive into the details with these Residents. The mystical magic of daily coffee is a topic that has always intrigued me. Maybe you share some of their sentiments? The Residency Outreach Team of CFG prides itself on connecting with Psychiatric Residents. Meeting over a cup of coffee to discuss your career goals might just be the right coffee break you need in your busy life. In today's world, a virtual meet over coffee works too! Just let us know when your next coffee break is!

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