



*One Program's Response to a  
Tragic Event*

# Disclosure

© 2011 The Board of Trustees of the Leland Stanford Junior University—Dr. Ralph S. Greco (greco@stanford.edu)

Formerly the Director of a Malignant Program

“repentant sinner”

# Disclosure

The title, most of the slides, and all of the message, are from Ralph Greco, MD



# The Layout

Identify the problem  
elsewhere  
here

Build a solution  
the architect  
the plan  
the builders

Make it public so others can profit

# The good surgeon

DOES THE MOST CASES

DOES THE **BIG** CASES

IS THE FASTEST

NEVER GETS TIRED

STAYS THE LATEST

WILL COME IN DAY OR NIGHT



# The happy surgeon?

Career satisfaction for surgeons seems to be diminishing

Affects patient safety, quality of care, medical errors

Also has personal consequences to relationships, family, self

Younger surgeons, especially, can be at significant risk for stressors and burnout

# Burnout and Satisfaction With Work-Life Balance Among US Physicians Relative to the General

Research Report

Tait D. Shanafelt,  
Daniel Satele, BS,

## Burnout Among U.S. Medical Students, Residents, and Early Career Physicians Relative

Liselotte N. Dyrbye

Well-Being

## Depressive Symptoms and Residents: A

Deborah Goebert, DPH, Diane Thibault, PhD, Phillip Bryson, LCSW, Kimberly Epler, PhD, Joel Schechter, PhD, and Jodi Tate

# Association of Resident Fatigue and Distress With Perceived Medical Errors

Colin P. West, MD, PhD

Angelina D. Tan, BS, B

Thomas M. Haberman

Jeff A. Sloan, PhD

Tait D. Shanafelt, MD

## Rates of medication errors among depressed and burnt out residents: prospective cohort study

Amy M Fahrenkopf, instructor of paediatrics,<sup>1</sup> Theodore C Sectish, associate professor of paediatrics,<sup>2</sup> Laura K Barger, research fellow,<sup>3</sup> Paul J Sharek, assistant professor of paediatrics,<sup>2</sup> Daniel Lewin, assistant professor of paediatrics,<sup>4</sup> Margaret M Chiang, assistant professor of paediatrics,<sup>1</sup> Sarah J Lewin, associate professor of paediatrics,<sup>4</sup> Christopher P...<sup>1,3</sup>

Well-Being of Students

## Burnout and Serious Thoughts of Dropping Out of Medical School: A Multi-Institutional Study

Liselotte N. Dyrbye, MD, MHPE, Matthew R. Thomas, MD, David V. Power, MD, MPH, Steven Durning, MD, Christine Moutier, MD, F. Stanford Massie, Jr, MD, William Harper, MD, Anne Eacker, MD, Daniel W. Szydio, Jeff A. Sloan, PhD, and Tait D. Shanafelt, MD

What is burnout?

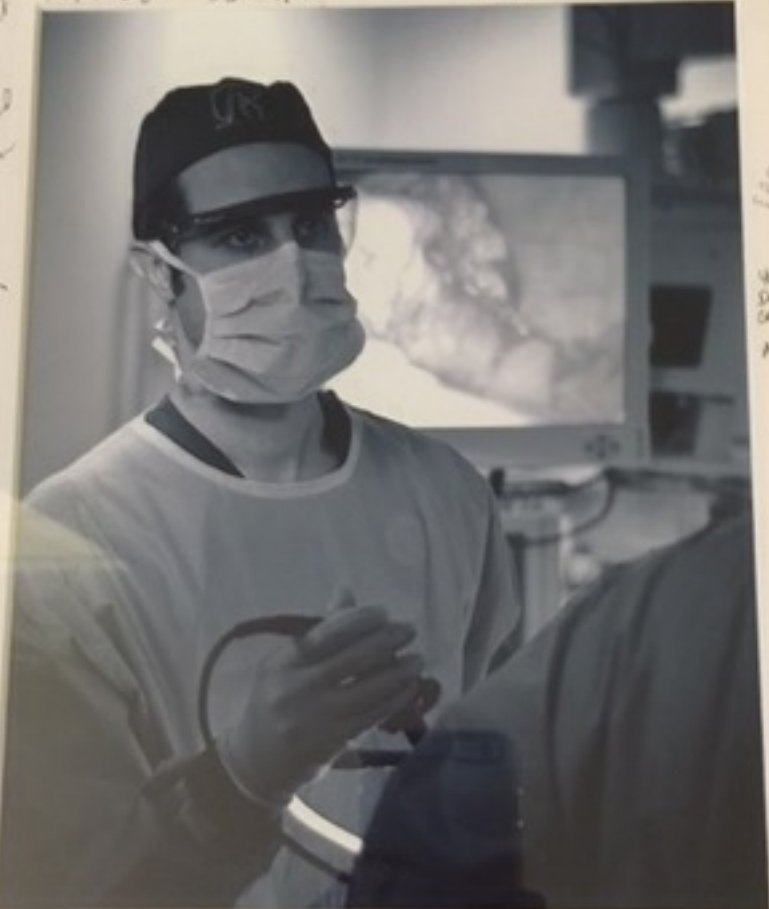
Syndrome of personal distress characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, decreased sense of personal accomplishment





Chicago Area ...  
Greg,  
Congratulations on  
all your success! I have really  
enjoyed having you on the service.  
I know you will do very well  
keep playing the blues and if  
you will reach for  
the stars that will  
bring you success  
and I hope you  
will be successful  
in all your  
endeavors  
I will be in my  
good luck in  
Chicago  
Mike  
Mansfield

Greg -  
Enjoyed working with  
you at Kaiser. All  
Best of luck in all  
future endeavors &  
you will be a very successful  
surgeon.  
(PS I plan to visit in Chicago)  
Rick Bloom



Greg,  
I'm happy you  
"moved" to  
Chicago. Hope  
you'll be  
successful  
in all your  
endeavors  
Mike  
Mansfield

It's so much  
better on the other  
side of the mountain  
Mike Mansfield

Greg -  
You are as  
good as the other side  
of the mountain  
of the best  
of the best  
Mike Mansfield

Greg -  
Lots of love  
under the  
same sky  
together  
a few  
t.

Greg -  
Love, love, love  
you. A leading  
man in surgery. All the best  
Mike Mansfield

Stanford Department of Surgery  
Chief Resident 2010

Admas  
won't be the same  
without you. Do good.  
Mike Mansfield

Follow me  
and you'll be  
successful  
Mike Mansfield







# General Surgery Resident Teaching Award

Voted by Medical Students for  
Outstanding Teaching

CONRAD VIAL  
2001

RUSSELL WOO  
2006

RONALD JOU  
2011

CHRISTOPHER BARRY  
2002

GREGORY FELDMAN  
2007

RICHARD PARENT

## STANFORD UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE DEPARTMENT OF SURGERY

this is to certify that

*Gregory Feldman, M.D.*

has been selected by the 2009-2010 surgical residents  
to be the recipient of the

### 2010 John Henry Smith, III, M.D. Award

*"You have distinguished yourself as the outstanding resident of the year  
through your leadership, hard work, honesty,  
dedication, and concern for your patients."*

June 18, 2010



THE ARNOLD P. GOLD FOUNDATION  
DEDICATED TO FOSTERING HUMANISM IN MEDICINE

THE GOLD FOUNDATION  
HUMANISM AND EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARD  
TO AN OUTSTANDING RESIDENT ROLE MODEL

**GREGORY FELDMAN, M.D.**

SELECTED BY

STANFORD UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

CLASS OF TWO THOUSAND AND EIGHT

HEREBY PRESENTED

ON THIS TWENTY SEVENTH DAY OF APRIL

TWO THOUSAND AND SEVEN

Jordan J. Cohen, M.D.  
Chairman  
The Arnold P. Gold Foundation

Philip A. Pizzo, M.D.  
Dean  
Stanford University School of Medicine



*In memory of*  
**GREGORY A. FELDMAN, M.D.**  
SURGICAL RESIDENT 2005-2009  
ADMINISTRATIVE CHIEF 2009-2010  
DEPARTMENT OF SURGERY  
STANFORD UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER

Failure to Adapt  
is a  
Formula for Extinction

Investigate stress and balance in Stanford residents

Develop a program to address imbalance

Attract national attention

Assemble a team to keep movement going

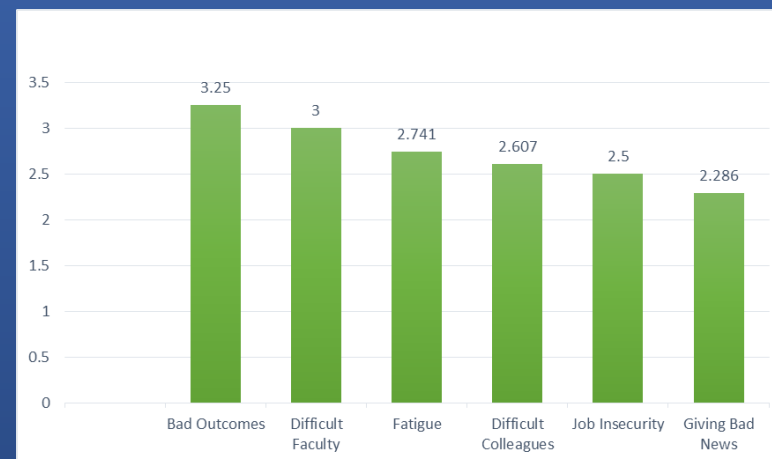
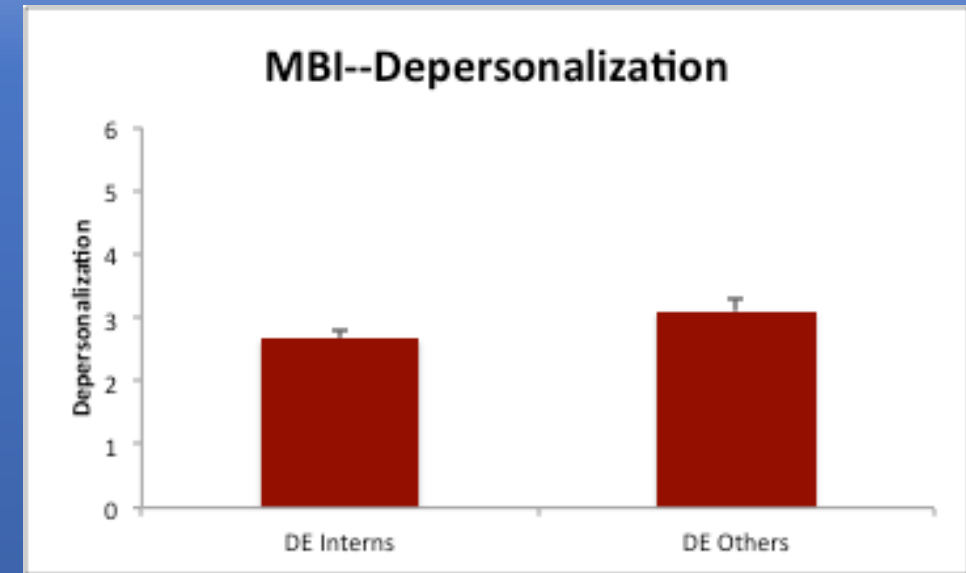
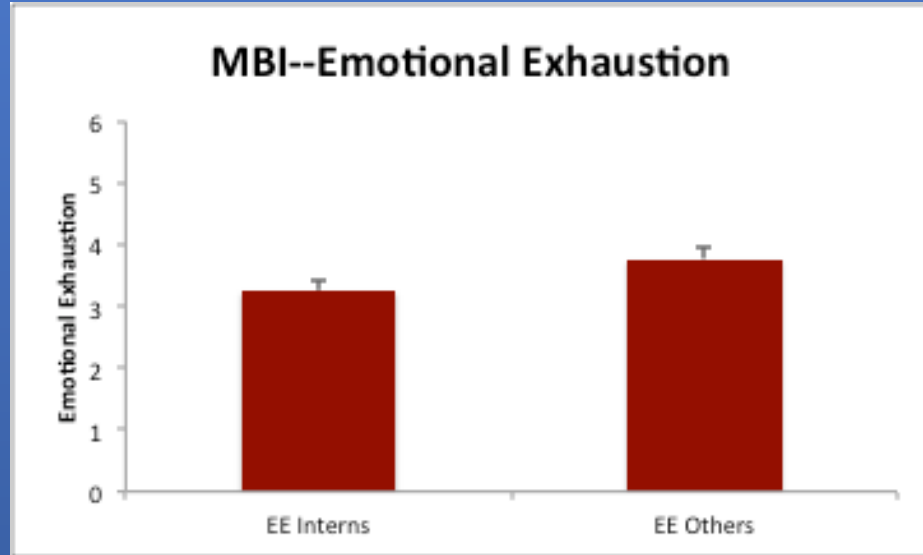
# Data Collected 2010-2012

BY ARGHAVAN SALLES, M.D., Ph.D

1. WELL BEING
2. BURN OUT
3. BELONGING
4. SLEEP AND EXERCISE HABITS
5. MEDICATIONS, TOBACCO AND ALCOHOL USAGE



# Burnout in Stanford residents



Rankings of professional stressors

# Work–life balance

**Work–life balance** as a concept to include the proper prioritizing between:

## Work

Career

Ambition

## Lifestyle

Health

Pleasure

Leisure

Family

Spiritual development/  
meditation

# Wayne State Life Balance Quiz

## 15 True/ False Questions

- 0-2: Good balance
- 3-5: On the Edge
- 5+: Out of Balance

Data collected by Dr Greco, Arghavan Salles, Cara Liebert and others

# Stanford Surgery

## Life in Balance by PG Year 2013

Year	Balanced	Out of Balance	Total
PGY1	3	2	5
PGY2	1	7	8
PGY3	0	4	4
PGY4	1	3	4
PGY5	0	4	4
<b>Total</b>	5	20	25

How do we promote “balance” for our residents? The vision...

Establishment of / or participation in a resident well being program

Resident participation in the design and governance of the program

- Educate faculty and residents about signs of depression
- Teach strategies for dealing with stress, burn out and depression such as self reflection and awareness as well as a venue for sharing ideas
- Educate residents about resources for handling stress and depression. Provide easy access to counseling which is completely confidential.
- Sponsor team building activities and an organized mentoring program.

- Provide leadership and education to de-stigmatize calling for help.
- Provide group meetings by PG year with a trained counselor.
- Acknowledge that stress, burnout, depression and suicide are deeply embedded in our profession and also common in faculty and staff.

- Eliminate the culture of shame – the perception that infallibility is a pre-requisite and that errors and bad outcomes are your fault.
- Establish a policy of “zero tolerance” for ridicule, humiliation and all abusive behavior and a reporting mechanism that residents find credible.



- Emphasize the importance of physical health and enable residents the time to see their PCP's and dentists
- Guarantee that residents can access healthy food, exercise and clean on call living quarters.
- Consider naming a program/department ombuds to impartially and confidentially investigate any perceived violation of the well being program.

# Founding Committee on Balance in Life

**RALPH S. GRECO, M.D.**

**RACHAEL CALLCUT, M.D.**  
**CLAUDIA MUELLER, M.D., Ph.D.**

**SURGERY RESIDENTS:**

**GREG MAGEE, M.D.**  
**ARGHAVAN SALLES, M.D., Ph.D.**  
**MEDIGET TESHOME, M.D.**  
**YULIA ZAK, M.D.**

**THOMAS M. KRUMMEL, M.D.**

# Balance in Life

- Healthy Food
- Doctors' Visits
- After Hours

Physical Well-Being

Professional Well-Being

- Class Representation
- Resident Mentorship
- Leadership

- Counseling sessions
- Retreat

Psychological Well-Being

Social Well-Being

- Social Events
- After hours guide

# Resident Refrigerator and Club House in the Goodman Simulation Center





# Team Building Resident Mentorship Program Ropes Course



# Psychological Health

- Balance in Life Class Meetings

- Lisa Post, Ph.D



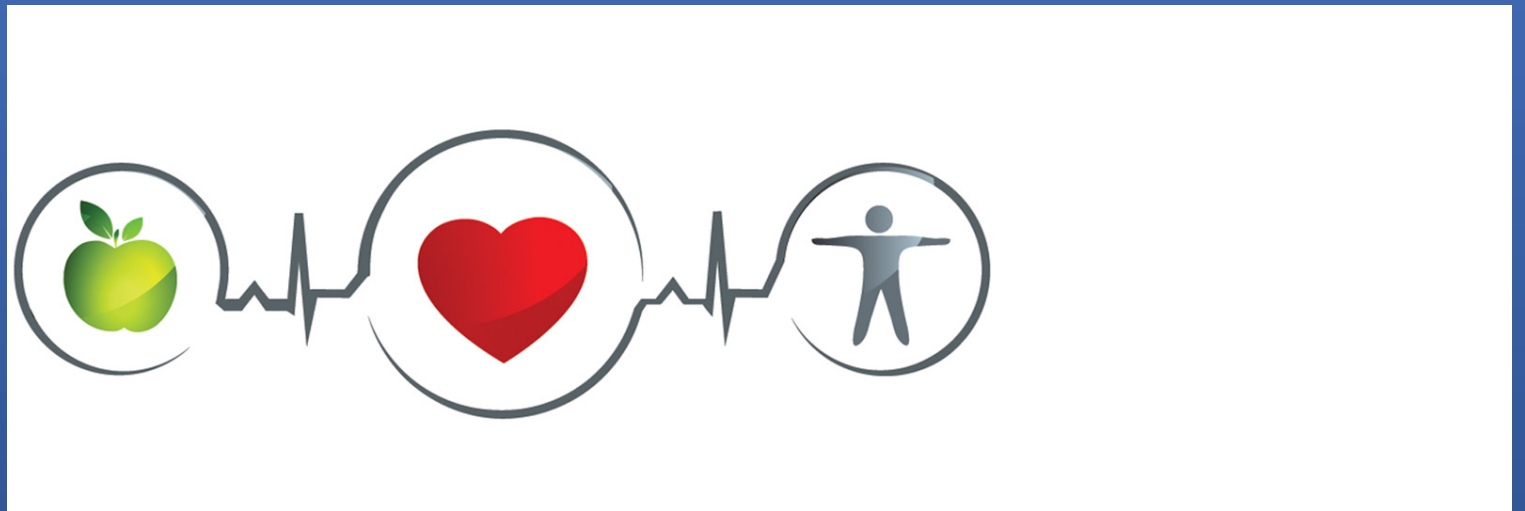
# “After Hours” Brochure

- Primary Care Physicians
- Dentist
- Hiking/Biking Trails
- Restaurants
- Local Travel
- Gyms



# Physical Health

- Visits to Doctors and Dentists
- Healthy diet
- Exercise





# Challenges

- Attending MD buy-in
  - Where did you get the idea you could lead a balanced life? I've been unbalanced for forty years.
  - I regret that I missed the childhood of all my children. But surgery is worth it – don't you think?
- Resident buy-in
  - You call sailing on San Francisco Bay a retreat? This place is a country club.
- Outcomes
  - Does this really make a difference?

# Outcomes

- Refrigerator
  - Allotted \$50 out of 100 by residents
  - Used several times per week
  - Residents found it to be, on average, “extremely valuable”
    - “Greatest thing on the planet”
    - “Would skip many more meals if I didn’t have it”
    - “Totally a mood improvement”
    - “Coke zero and string cheese are integral to my survival in residency”

# Outcomes

- Social Events
  - Found to be valuable
  - Allotted \$26 by residents
  - Many positive comments:
    - “Amazing opportunity to interact with co-residents and faculty out of the hospital. Incredibly beneficial; something that sets us apart from other training programs.”
    - “Instill a feeling of class unity.”

# Outcomes

- Counseling session
- 76-100% attendance on average
- Allotted \$24 by residents
- Mostly positive comments (27 of 30):
  - “It's helpful to debrief with fellow residents about our struggles/challenges which are often shared experiences.”
  - “It is very validating and supportive to hear about the shared experiences of residency among individuals dealing with similar scenarios that could individually make one feel very isolated.”

## VIEWPOINT

## Promoting Balance in the Lives of Resident Physicians

### A Call to Action

**Arghavan Salles, MD, PhD**  
Department of Surgery,  
Stanford University  
School of Medicine,  
Stanford, California.

**Cara A. Liebert, MD**  
Department of Surgery,  
Stanford University  
School of Medicine,  
Stanford, California.

**Ralph S. Greco, MD**  
Department of Surgery,  
Stanford University  
School of Medicine,  
Stanford, California.

**As physicians**, we spend a significant amount of time counseling our patients on how to live healthier lives. Ironically, as trainees and practicing physicians, we often do not prioritize our own physical and psychological health. Most residents go to work despite significant physical impairment and severe anxiety.<sup>1</sup> Compared with population controls, residents are more likely to experience burnout and exhibit symptoms of depression.<sup>2</sup> These problems persist into practice; a recent national survey<sup>3</sup> found that 40% of surgeons were burnt out and that 30% had symptoms of depression. Another study<sup>4</sup> reported that 6% of surgeons experienced suicidal ideation in the preceding 12 months. Perhaps most startling, there are roughly 300 to 400 physicians who die by suicide per year—the equivalent of 3 medical school graduating classes.<sup>5</sup>

Against the backdrop of compelling data suggesting the need for interventions to promote wellness, our general surgery training program suffered the tragic suicide of one of our recent graduates in November 2010. After mourning his loss only 5 months after having left Stanford, our residency program took decisive action to create a multifaceted program aimed at enhancing resident wellness. Our goals were to create a program to help residents cope with daily stress, provide tools to manage challenges after completing residency, and reduce the risk of burnout, depression, and suicide.

We first formed a committee consisting of residents and faculty. Through several meetings over the course of 4 months, we arrived at the structure of a Balance in Life program, now in its fourth year of implementation. Others, faced with similar challenges, have created educational mental health lectureships.<sup>6</sup> Our comprehensive curriculum strives to promote work-life balance despite the inherent stressors of surgical training. As outlined here, the program is divided into 4 domains of well-being: professional, physical, psychological, and social.

#### Professional Well-being

There are 2 components of the Balance in Life program aimed at improving professional well-being: a resident mentorship program and leadership training. To our pre-existing faculty-resident mentorship structure, we added a program pairing senior residents with junior residents. To create effective mentorship pairs, in September of each year, junior residents select their senior resident mentors. Quarterly lunch meetings between the junior and senior pairs are funded by the program to facilitate an ongoing relationship. This provides junior residents a private, informal setting in which to discuss concerns about work, research, or their personal lives.

The Balance in Life program also builds on a pre-existing leadership curriculum in our department that includes sessions on leadership styles and teamwork. We expanded this program to include an annual outdoor ropes course focused on leadership, mutual support, and team bonding. Residents form groups across postgraduate-year levels and participate in various team-building activities, including finding their way through a maze while blindfolded, lifting team members safely through a web of rope, and discovering the hidden contents of a container using string, paper clips, and a mirror. These activities afford unique opportunities for residents to collaborate outside the hospital setting and build rich relationships with each other.

#### Physical Well-being

A significant challenge our residents faced was the lack of healthy food options in the hospital, particularly in the evenings and on weekends. To solve this problem, we purchased a refrigerator that was placed in a secure location in our surgical education center to which residents have badge access. The residents appreciate having a refrigerator that is stocked weekly with healthy drinks and snacks. In addition, residents are encouraged and expected to see a physician annually and a dentist semiannually. To facilitate residents seeking regular health care, incoming interns are provided with a guide listing physicians, dentists, and physical-fitness venues recommended by resident peers.

#### Psychological Well-being

One of the primary goals of the Balance in Life program is to provide residents with tools to manage stress in their lives. We enlisted an expert clinical psychologist with experience working with high-performance teams to meet with our residents weekly. These 90-minute confidential meetings are scheduled by postgraduate year on a rotating schedule, with each postgraduate-year group meeting with the psychologist every 6 weeks. This time is protected in the same way as weekly educational time, and topics are selected by the residents. Residents have the opportunity to discuss issues with their peers and develop strategies for managing their concerns. As one resident stated, "It is very validating and supportive to hear about the shared experiences of residency among individuals dealing with similar scenarios that could individually make one feel very isolated." Residents increasingly take advantage of the opportunity to meet with our clinical psychologist individually to discuss personal issues.

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**TIME IN DEPTH > DOCTORS ARE STRESSED, BURNED OUT,**

**DEPRESSED, AND WHEN THEY SUFFER, SO DO THEIR PATIENTS.**

# Life / *SUPPORT*

**INSIDE THE MOVEMENT TO SAVE THE**

**MENTAL HEALTH OF AMERICA'S DOCTORS**

*By Mandy Oaklander / Photographs by Balazs Gardi for TIME*

*Dr. Arghavan Salles,  
35, photographed as  
a surgical resident  
at Stanford Health  
Care*

# The New Paradigm

I love surgery, but I love my spouse and children more.

I like my busy practice, and I protect my time at home.

I like doing cases that help patients-be they big or small.

I exercise 4 days a week in reserved time.

I love music, art and literature.

I plan to retire while I am still healthy enough to enjoy the fruits of my labor.

# Balance in Life

