

7th International Conference on

BRAIN INJURY & NEUROLOGICAL DISORDERS

April 10-12, 2018 | Amsterdam, Netherlands

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Disability evaluation: Disability or malingering?

The disability evaluation is one of the most daunting tasks faced by evaluating physicians. Most physicians do not receive training in this specific task. Converting medical language into vocational and legal language is difficult to grasp both conceptually and on a technical basis. The process is fraught with conflicting interests within the physician whose role is to treat the patient towards recovery and at the same time advocating the patient. Family pressures can also be conflicting; some wants the patient to go back to work, while others believing that the patient should not. While the evaluating physician has a responsibility to the patient, he or she also has the responsibility to society. Treatment itself carries risks of harm as well. Finally, policies that govern disability can change from year to year. Therefore, addressing this issue conceptually rather than from a purely technical standpoint likely has greater benefit.

Biography

Anthony Lee has received his Bachelor of Science Degrees in Mechanical Engineering and in Biology with a minor on Music. He pursued his MD from The College of Physicians and Surgeons at Columbia University. He has completed his Internship at New York Hospital Queens and his residency training at NYU in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation. He has obtained his Fellowship training at New England Baptist Hospital in Spine Medicine. He is a Faculty Physician at Harvard Medical School, directly responsible for training future pain physicians in one of the top pain fellowship programs in the United States. His expertise is in complex spinal disorders, headaches and general rehabilitation. He divides his clinical work between the Department of Anesthesia and the Department of Orthopedic Surgery at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center.

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