

LETTERS



GMC AND INDEPENDENT TRAINING REVIEW

Further concerns about the Shape of Training proposals

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We would like to add our concerns to those of Dean regarding the recommendations made by Greenaway.¹ Of primary concern is that the review risks introducing a subconsultant grade, which would be detrimental to patient care and the NHS.

We would also urge caution that levels of competence should not be reduced nor competencies removed from the curriculum. The UK has been reported to have one of the best healthcare systems in the world,² further evidenced by falling death rates.³ Although efficiencies may be possible, they will not be addressed by the recommendations made in the Shape of Training report. Furthermore, changes in training seem to be proposed beyond government agendas for seven day working, potential re-examination of Britain's position in Europe, and doctors' contract renegotiations. Such rushed and narrowly consulted implementation undermines the recommendation of the Independent Working Time Regulations Taskforce to the Department of Health, which agreed that an open and collaborative approach to making changes to training was the route to "the successful delivery of patient care and training of junior doctors."⁴

We believe it is irrational to proceed with proposals without full, transparent consultation, involving all stakeholders, and

formal piloting, especially when changes are radical and may need to be abandoned should they fail to deliver.

With grave concern for patient safety and the quality of surgical training in the UK, the Association of Surgeons in Training, along with a large proportion of trainee groups,⁵ calls for a pause in the implementation of the Shape of Training recommendations.

Competing interests: None declared.

Full response at: www.bmj.com/content/350/bmj.h2400/rr.

- 1 Dean BJF. GMC's supposedly independent training review included secret meetings with politicians. *BMJ* 2015;350:h2400. (7 May).
- 2 Davis K, Stremikis K, Squires D, Schoen C. Mirror, mirror on the wall. How the performance of the US health care system compares internationally. Jun 2014. www.commonwealthfund.org/-/media/files/publications/fund-report/2014/jun/1755_davis_mirror_mirror_2014.pdf.
- 3 Office for National Statistics. Deaths registered in England and Wales, 2012. Jul 2013. www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171778_317087.pdf.
- 4 Independent Working Time Regulations Taskforce. The implementation of the working time directive, and its impact on the NHS and health professionals. Mar 2014. www.rcseng.ac.uk/policy/documents/wtd-taskforce-report-2014.
- 5 BMA. Pause medical training overhaul, say 15 doctor organisations. 8 Jan 2015. <http://bma.org.uk/news-views-analysis/news/2015/january/pause-medical-training-overhaul-say-15-doctor-organisations>.

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