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**Article:**

Johnson, J orcid.org/0000-0003-0431-013X, Bu, C and Panagioti, M (2018) Tackling burnout in UK trainee doctors is vital for a sustainable, safe, high quality NHS. *BMJ*, 362. k3705. ISSN 0959-8138

<https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.k3705>

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## **Tackling burnout in UK trainee doctors is vital for a sustainable, safe, high quality NHS**

Judith Johnson, Christopher Bu and Maria Panagioti

*Letter to the BMJ; published September 2018*

We read the GMC survey findings on burnout in trainee and trainer doctors with great interest. Increasing evidence suggests doctor wellbeing is a marker of the quality of care delivered to patients. These results therefore raise cause for concern in relation to patient care. Our previous studies have shown a consistent link between healthcare staff burnout and patient safety[1-3]. In a recent meta-comprehensive analysis accepted for publication in JAMA Internal Medicine[4], we examined the association between burnout in doctors and patient safety incidents, low professionalism and patient satisfaction. Of particular relevance is our finding that the association between burnout and low professionalism was two times higher in trainee and early career doctors compared with more experienced doctors. As such, addressing burnout particularly in trainee doctors has strategic importance for the provision of safe, high quality patient care.

Two recent meta-analytic reviews have established that interventions to reduce burnout in doctors are effective [5,6]. Unfortunately, these interventions have been developed and evaluated mostly in the US. National research investments are needed to develop and evaluate interventions for enhancing the wellbeing of trainee UK doctors which take into consideration the distinctive characteristics of the UK health care system. We have recently piloted the delivery of i) a resilience training intervention in obstetric and gynaecological registrar doctors as part of the Yorkshire and Humber Patient Safety Translational Research Centre and ii) mindfulness courses in foundation year doctors in the Royal Liverpool Hospital following the award of successful institutional funding. Both courses have been well-received by trainee doctors. Although such programmes should be accompanied by organisational improvements, these early encouraging findings suggest that the wellbeing of trainee UK doctors is subject to establishing a flourishing training environment and an engaging career culture.

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