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**PRESS RELEASE**

## Better supervision beats bullying

Major medical education survey reveals key findings on trainees' views of their training

A major survey of the UK's postgraduate trainee doctors, published today, has found that they view their supervision as crucial to their experience of their training posts – including helping to combat perceived bullying in the workplace.

The 2006 National Trainee Survey, jointly undertaken by the Postgraduate Medical Education and Training Board (PMETB) and Conference of Postgraduate Medical Deans (COPMeD), analysed responses from nearly 25,000 trainees. The survey, designed to drive improvements in postgraduate medical education, has found that the majority of trainees are satisfied with the training they receive but identified variations in experience. Initial results were published in November last year.

The survey consistently points to a link between better supervision during training and greater satisfaction with training posts.

### **Higher supervision, higher satisfaction**

The survey reveals that GP trainees rated the quality of their supervision more highly than any other specialty group, scoring it at 90/100. This was reflected with them scoring 80/100 for satisfaction with their posts overall. Trainee surgeon Senior House Officers (SHOs) scored the quality of their supervision the lowest of all groups (around 65/100) and this is again reflected by the fact that they rated themselves the least satisfied with their posts (although still scoring around 75 out of 100).

### **Bullying**

Importantly, the survey also links better supervision with the perceived incidence of bullying: GP trainees indicate the lowest exposure to bullying with around 6% experiencing this behaviour. Around 14% of the surgery SHOs experienced perceived bullying but they were not the highest. Around 16% of obstetrics and gynaecology trainees – with the second lowest supervision score – topped the table of those specialty groups reporting perceived bullying. The survey measured the incidence of bullying by asking trainees if they had been subjected to persistent behaviour in their posts that had undermined their professional confidence and/or self esteem.

## Driving up improvement

Postgraduate deaneries across the UK (which oversee delivery of training) have used the survey's findings to develop action plans to ensure that possible weaknesses identified by trainees are addressed. A summary of the action plans is also published as part of the report.

Anita Thomas, Chair of the PMETB Training Committee, said: "PMETB's goal is to ensure that UK postgraduate medical education and training is of the highest quality. This survey shows that most trainees see the training they receive as satisfactory but also that improvements can be made. Medical students and Foundation Years doctors work phenomenally hard to gain access to specialist training and have every right to expect the highest standards when they are in training – including a working environment free from bullying. To put it simply, the survey suggests that trainees feel that the more supported they are, the more they get from their training and the better prepared they are to contribute towards good patient care."

Professor Elisabeth Paice, Chair of COPMeD said: "Understanding where training could be better is a fundamental step in helping deaneries to deliver improvements. The National Trainee Survey gives trainees a powerful voice in ensuring that their training equips them to deliver the highest standards of care to patients. It is the deaneries' challenge to ensure that trainees' dedication is repaid by making sure that their training is the best – and most supportive – it can be."

Next steps will be the 2007 National Trainee Survey, which will also compare trainees' perceptions with the views of those who train them. The full National Trainee Survey report, and further details on the survey, can be downloaded from [www.pmetb.org.uk/traineesurvey](http://www.pmetb.org.uk/traineesurvey)

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## NOTES TO EDITORS

### PMETB

PMETB is an independent statutory body, responsible for overseeing and promoting the development of postgraduate medical education and training for all specialties, including general practice, across the UK.

It assumed its statutory powers on 30 September 2005 taking over the responsibilities of the Specialist Training Authority of the medical Royal Colleges (STA) and the Joint Committee on Postgraduate General Practice Training (JCPGPT).

The vision that PMETB has set itself is to achieve excellence in postgraduate medical education, training, assessment and certification throughout the UK to improve the knowledge, skills and experience of doctors and the health and healthcare of patients and the public.

### **National Trainee Survey**

In 2006, PMETB in collaboration with COPMeD, undertook the first ever national survey of doctors in training in the UK. A snapshot of trainees' perceptions was taken between May and July 2006. The aim of the survey was to measure trainees' perception of their training provider's compliance with PMETB's *Generic standards of training*<sup>1</sup>, developed to introduce consistency in postgraduate medical education.

The survey is being used as a screening tool to identify locations where trainees' responses potentially indicate that compliance with the standards is lower than the national mean. In these cases, deaneries have drawn up action plans to address any concerns suggested by the survey. The delivery of these action plans is monitored as part of PMETB's quality assurance system.

It is important to note that the supervision and satisfaction scores out of 100 cited in this press release are **not** percentages – they are mean supervision scores.

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<sup>1</sup> PMETB (2006). *Generic standards for training*. Available from [www.pmetb.org.uk/quality](http://www.pmetb.org.uk/quality)