

**20 October, 2014**

## **MPS: GMC investigations impact on the health of 72% of doctors**

A Medical Protection Society (MPS) survey of 180 doctors investigated by the General Medical Council in the last five years found that almost three quarters (72%) believed the investigation had a detrimental impact on their mental and/or physical health.<sup>1</sup> The survey also revealed:

- Respondents' involvement in GMC investigations impacted on their stress/anxiety (93%), personal life (76%), health and wellbeing (74%), confidence (69%) and professional reputation (52%)
- Almost half of respondents (47%) did not believe they received enough support in looking after their health throughout the investigation
- 70% of respondents said that the General Medical Council should offer more support to doctors facing an investigation.

The survey also revealed that more than a quarter of respondents (28%) considered leaving the medical profession as a result of their experience, 8% changed their roles and 2% left the profession.

### **Dr Richard Stacey, Senior Medicolegal Adviser at the Medical Protection Society (MPS) says:**

“Although these insights into the impact of GMC investigations on the health of doctors are alarming, they are unfortunately not surprising. The attributes that make a good doctor (for example, being caring, kind and conscientious) can also make them particularly vulnerable if they become the subject of a GMC investigation.

“A doctor can experience fear when they receive a letter from the GMC informing them that they are the subject of a GMC investigation. The GMC do provide information about their procedures to doctors who become the subject of an investigation, however the correspondence can appear formal and legalistic.

“While MPS acknowledges that the GMC has recently taken steps to soften the wording of correspondence with doctors being investigated, the results suggest that more needs to be done.

### **Dr Stacey added:**

“It is important that doctors suffering with mental or physical problems relating to stress and/or anxiety get help early. It is reassuring to see that 77% of respondents to the survey sought help or support for their health issues from family or friends, and 62% sought assistance from colleagues.

“MPS recognises the impact a GMC investigation can have on the health of doctors, and provides a confidential MPS Counselling Service as a benefit of MPS membership, as well as the support they receive in relation to GMC procedures.”

Ends

**For further information please contact Shannon Darling, MPS Press Officer at +44 020 7399 1319 or email [shannon.darling@mps.org.uk](mailto:shannon.darling@mps.org.uk)**

### **Notes to editors:**

<sup>1</sup> *MPS conducted a survey of doctors, including GPs and consultants, who had been involved in a GMC investigation in the last five years to understand more about their experience and determine the impact it had on their health. The survey received 180 respondents.*

<sup>3</sup> *If you would like a picture of Dr Stacey, please contact me directly.*

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## About MPS

MPS is the world's leading protection organisation for doctors, dentists and healthcare professionals. We protect and support the professional interests of more than 290,000 members around the world. Our benefits include access to indemnity, expert advice and peace of mind. Highly qualified advisers are on hand to talk through a question or concern at any time.

Our in-house experts assist with the wide range of legal and ethical problems that arise from professional practice. This includes clinical negligence claims, complaints, medical and dental council inquiries, legal and ethical dilemmas, disciplinary procedures, inquests and fatal accident inquiries.

Our philosophy is to support safe practice in medicine and dentistry by helping to avert problems in the first place. We do this by promoting risk management through our workshops, E-learning, clinical risk assessments, publications, conferences, lectures and presentations.

MPS is not an insurance company. All the benefits of membership of MPS are discretionary as set out in the Memorandum and Articles of Association.