

Understanding Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault & Rape Among Colleagues in the Surgical Workforce

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Original Article

Sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape by colleagues in the surgical workforce, and how women and men are living different realities: observational study using NHS population-derived weights

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16 Items

Sexual Harassment

Unwanted sexual talk or comments (e.g., unwanted or inappropriate sexual remarks about you...)

Offer of promotion or other work-related advantage or advancement in exchange for a sexual favour (e.g., offering a reward or special treatment if you cooperated sexually)

Sexual Assault

Being forced to partake in physical contact in exchange for training / career development (e.g., an unwanted or uninvited hug, kiss on the cheek...or a more extreme or overtly sexual type of behaviour)

Touching of your body without consent, including any area of the body (except genitals and/or breast tissue)

Rape

Rape in the workplace



16 Items - **Being a Target** (Victim, Survivor)

Sexual Harassment

Unwanted sexual talk or comments (e.g., unwanted or inappropriate sexual remarks about you...)

Offer of promotion or other work-related advantage or advancement in exchange for a sexual favour (e.g., offering a reward or special treatment if you cooperated sexually)

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Touching of your body without consent, including any area of the body (except genitals and/or breast tissue)

Rape

Rape in the workplace



16 Items - Being a Target (Victim, Survivor) + Witnessing (analogous items)

Sexual Harassment

Unwanted sexual talk or comments (e.g., unwanted or inappropriate sexual remarks about you...)

Offer of promotion or other work-related advantage or advancement in exchange for a sexual favour (e.g., offering a reward or special treatment if you cooperated sexually)

Sexual Assault

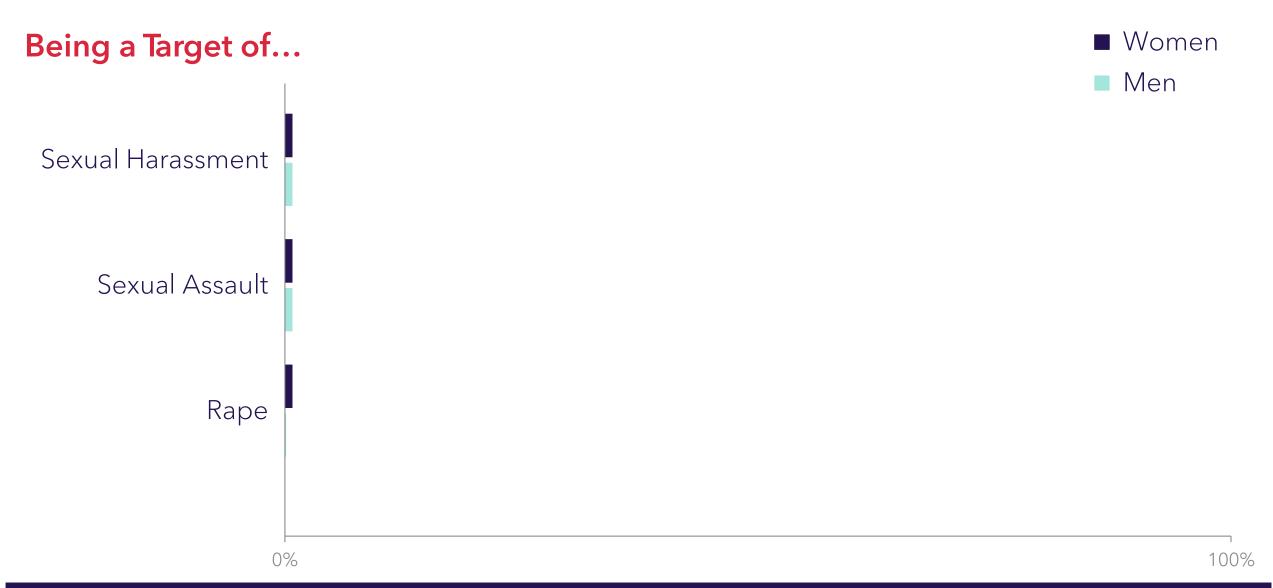
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Touching of your body without consent, including any area of the body (except genitals and/or breast tissue)

Rape

Rape in the workplace











Are they adequately addressing issues of sexual harassment and assault in our profession?

General Medical Council

NHS Trusts

British Medical Association

Health Education England

Royal Colleges



Are they <u>adequately</u> addressing issues of sexual harassment and assault in our profession?

% Yes *

General Medical Council

NHS Trusts

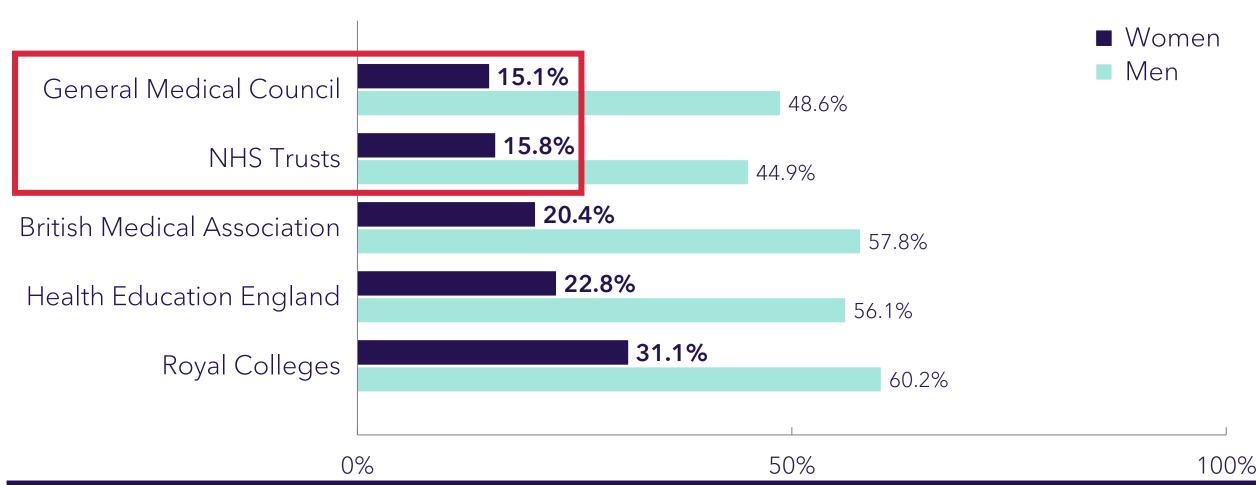
British Medical Association

Health Education England

Royal Colleges



Are they <u>adequately</u> addressing issues of sexual harassment and assault in our profession?





Are they <u>adequately</u> addressing issues of sexual harassment and assault in our profession?

| | | % Yes* | _ | Gender | Mean Evaluation (s.d.) | | |
|-----------|-----------------------------|--------|--------|--------|------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| | | Women | Men | Р | d | Women | Men |
| | General Medical Council | 15.1 % | 48.6 % | < .001 | .64 | 2.80 (1.90) | 4.07 (1.91) |
| | NHS Trusts | 15.8 % | 44.9 % | < .001 | .64 | 2.89 (1.83) | 4.12 (1.84) |
| I | British Medical Association | 20.4 % | 57.8 % | < .001 | .66 | 3.18 (1.86) | 4.47 (1.87) |
| | Health Education England | 22.8 % | 56.1 % | < .001 | .60 | 3.18 (1.91) | 4.39 (1.93) |
| Royal Col | Royal Colleges | 31.1 % | 60.2 % | < .001 | .48 | 3.55 (1.95) | 4.53 (1.95) |

^{1 (}No, Absolutely Not) - 7 (Yes, Absolutely)

[&]amp; N/A; Don't Know, or Not Applicable

^{*} Any value above scale's midpoint

Reporting Incidents?



List of Potential Reasons for Not Reporting

Lack of confidence in fair outcome

Didn't think anything would happen

Perpetrator/s in position of power

No witnesses

Didn't want to rock the boat

Fear of repercussion from institution/s

Fear of repercussion from perpetrator/s

Fear of not being believed

Fear of damage to own reputation

Fear of being accused of "overreacting"

Worried about career development (e.g., impact on ARCP; Annual Review Competency Progression)

Worried about impact to mental health and well-being

Worried about ARCP (Annual Review Competency Progression) or other measure of career progression

Other reason (please describe, if you wish): _____

Didn't know how to report it

Seemed normal or 'acceptable' within the work culture

Didn't seem serious enough

Lack of adequate reporting systems (confidential, supportive, etc.)

Reporting Incidents?



Top Reasons for Not Reporting (most frequently cited)

Among Targets (Victims, Survivors)

Fear of being accused of "overreacting"

Fear of damage to own reputation

Didn't think anything would happen

Among Witnesses

Seemed normal or 'acceptable' within the work culture

Didn't seem serious enough

Fear of damage to own reputation



He said, "Talking about sexual misconduct at work", laughed and squeezed my breast twice with his fingers. The other junior male colleague looked away.

This supervisor repeatedly asked me out for dinner in person, via text and also called me out of work hours despite my refusing each time. I began to dread going to work for fear of repeats of these unwanted advances.



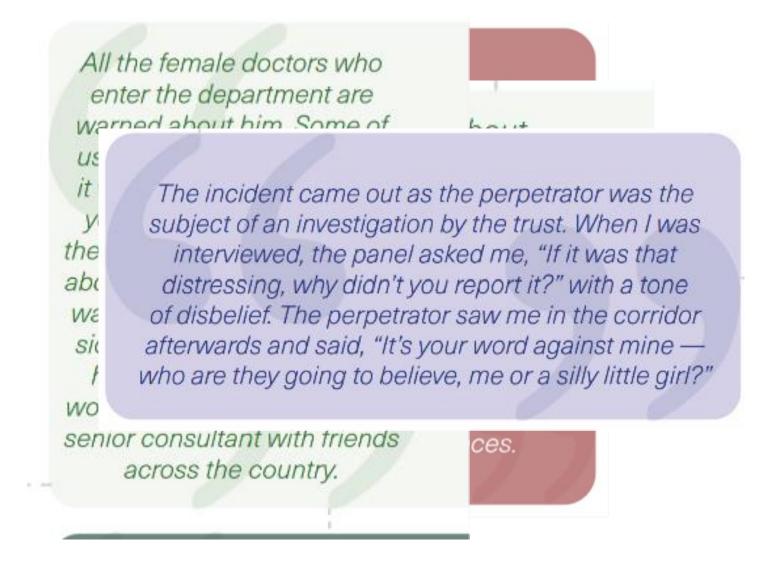
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All the female doctors who enter the department are warned about him. Some of us would even flirt back but it was disgusting and made you feel disgusted. He put the flat of his hand against my abdomen and stroked it as he walked past. It made me feel sick but I pretended it didn't happen. There's no way I would ever name him. He is a senior consultant with friends across the country.

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All the female doctors who enter the department are

The incident came out as the perpetrator was the

subject of an in interviewed, i distressing, wi of disbelief. The afterwards and who are they go

would ever nam senior consultar across the He is known as inappropriate with female trainees, who are told they will get good operating numbers if they go in his theatre if "they can cope with his behaviour". He has never been sanctioned for this, even though everyone in the department knows about it.



All the female doctors who

I asked more than five different victims of this man if they were prepared to give written statements and they didn't feel they could. The perpetrator remains in the organisation.

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though everyone in the
ows about it.



All the female doctors who

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Interactions with the opposite sex are

When I needed senior support overnight with unwell patients, this was refused by seniors, as they thought I had been the one to report (the perpetrator) for sexual misconduct. I wasn't the one who reported him.

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about it.



All the female doctors who

I asked mo different victii if they were pi written staten didn't feel th perpetrator r organi

Interactions with the opposite sex are routinely used to advantage. I'm unsure if it can be regarded as harassment when the affected individual allows it and benefits from it.

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". He has never been
ugh everyone in the
s about it.



Implementation and Investigation

We ask the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and accountable organisations to support:

- A National Implementation Panel to oversee progress by organisations on the recommendations in this report.
- Reform of reporting and investigation processes of sexual misconduct in healthcare, to improve safety and confidence in raising concerns and to ensure investigations are external, independent and fit for purpose.



Implementation an

We ask the Department of Health an

- 1. A National Implementation recommendations in this
 - 2. Reform of reporting and healthcare, to improve s investigations are exter



Ambitions for year 2

Improvements for less than full time (LTFT) To minimise the impact of LTFT on career progression by focusing

- Reduce the disparities across specialities for incentivising taking LTFT. Encourage more men to take LTFT to even out caring responsibilities. By reducing this atigma, we can reduce the pressure on women to take
- LTFT who work to accommodate caring responsibilities. - Create a safer environment for those choosing to take LTFT when re-joining

Recruitment and Promotion Practice

- Ensure more gender balance on shortlets.
- NHS Competency framework guidance for the development of all leaders at Ensure higher quality leadership development for all managers throughout
- NHSE is developing an NHS EDI workforce plan which will include specific actions and expectations to embed inclusive and fair recruitment and promotion practices in organisations, to address under-representation and talent management across all protected characteristics."

Education and Training

- Health Education England's review into medical education and training
- GMC's work on challenging stereotypes to ensure they are not perpetuated. This work will support staff as they progress through each stage of their education and training, informing their academic opportunities and















Policies and Codes of Conduct

We call for:

- 3. Every NHS Trust and healthcare provider to have an appropriate, specific and clear Sexual Violence/Sexual Safety Policy in place.
- 4. All healthcare educational bodies and professional associations to have an appropriate, specific and clear Code of Conduct which includes sexual behaviour. These codes should be signed up to by those who are employed by, study at, and belong to these entities, and should apply both within the workplace, and at work-related events such as conferences.
- Accountable organisations and professional associations to support and enact relevant pledges and charters such as the <u>BMA Sexism Pledge</u> and the <u>NHSE Sexual Safety</u> <u>Charter</u>.



Policies and Codes of Conduct

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- 3. Every NHS Trust and healthcare provider to have an Sexual Violence/Sexual Safety Policy in place.
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- 5. Accountable organisations and profession to support and enact relevant pledges an as the BMA Sexism Pledge and the NHSE Sexus Charter.





Education

We ask those responsible for the ongoing education of the healthcare workforce to:

- Integrate learning in recognising and taking appropriate
 action on sexual misconduct at all stages of a career in healthcare.
- Ensure active bystander, unconscious bias and awareness-raising training for all members of the healthcare team, with specific reference to dealing with incidents of sexual misconduct.
- Ensure all those involved in receiving reports of and/or investigating sexual misconduct have received specific validated education including learning from previous cases and have appropriate expertise, including critical competencies.



Culture and Performance of Accountable Organisations

We call upon accountable organisations to support:

- The reform of healthcare regulators' professional guidance to include sexual misconduct towards colleagues.
- Engagement of all stakeholders with the Implementation
 Panel, (as described in Recommendation 1) to report progress
 and to share data and expertise.
- 11. The agreement of standards for the management of reported incidents of sexual misconduct and scheduled prospective auditing of performance by organisations against those standards.
- 12. The inclusion in NHS, GMC and other relevant surveys, of questions on workforce satisfaction as to the adequacy of those organisations in dealing with sexual misconduct.
- 13. An equality and diversity-promoting agenda to improve the representation of women in local and national leadership roles, across all specialities and workforce groups in healthcare.



Culture and Performs

We call upon accountable organisation

- The reform of healthcare regulators' profes include sexual misconduct towards coller
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offence, embarrassment, humiliation or distress. What we mean by acting 'in a sexual way' You must not act in a sexual way towards colleagues with the effect or purpose of causing or sharing offence, embarrassment, humiliation or distress. What we mean by acting 'in a sexual's work follow our more detailed can include _ images, as well as unwelcome physical contact. You must follow our more detailed

can include _ images, as well isn't limited to _ verbal or written comments, displaying or sharing personal and professional boundaries. Euidance on Maintaining personal and professional boundaries. If you witness any of the behaviours described in paragraphs 56 or 57 you should act, taking account of the specific circumstances. For example, you could: them know that you feel that the behaviour you witnessed is unacceptable them know that you feel that the behaviour you witnessed is unacceptable challenge the behaviour by speaking to the person responsible – either at the time, if Safe to do so, or at an appropriate time and place workplace policy and our more detailed guidance on Raising and acting on conc workplace policy and our more detailed guidance on Raising and acting on concerns and make workplace policy and our more detailed guidance on Raising and acting on concerns aware of, and supports, your intention to about patient safety. Before you report the behaviour you witnessed, try and make report it.

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Culture a

We call upon a

9. The reform o

- offence, embarrassment, humiliation or distress. What we mean by acting 'in a sexual way' You must not act in a sexual way towards colleagues with the effect or purpose of causing or sharing. Q22 In the last 12 months, how many times have you been the target of unwanted behaviour of a offence, embarrassment, humiliation or distress. What we mean by acting 'in a sexual inages, as well as unwelcome physical contact, You muct four. Sexual nature in the workplace? This may include offensive or inappropriate sexualised conversation
- a. From patients / service users, their relatives or other members of the public b. From staff / colleagues include sexi 10. Engagement of all stakehous Panel, (as described in Recommendar Journal Policy and our more reporting the behaviour in line with your report the behaviour you witnessed, try and make

and to share data and expertise.

about patient safety. Before detailed guidance on Raising and acting on concerns that the person who was targeted is aware of, and supports, your intention to about patient safety. Before you report the behaviour you witnessed, try and make report it.

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Culture a

You must not act in a sexual way to ble Organisations

can include pharrassment humiliation or distress. What we mean by
this, how many time personal contact. You mean by Q22 In the last 12 months, how many times have you sexual nature in the workplace? This man

(including jokes), touching or assa thebmj We call upon a

covid-19 Research - Education - News & Views - Campaigns - Jobs -

9. The reform o

a. From patients / service users, the News include sexi b. From staff / colleagues

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L'ace bolicy at about patient safety

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One in four trainee doctors report discriminatory behaviours from colleagues, GMC finds

BMJ 2023; 382 doi: https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.p1601 (Published 11 July 2023)

Cite this as: BMJ 2023;382:p1601

Article Related content Responses Metrics ports, your intention to sed, try and make on concerns



Data Collection

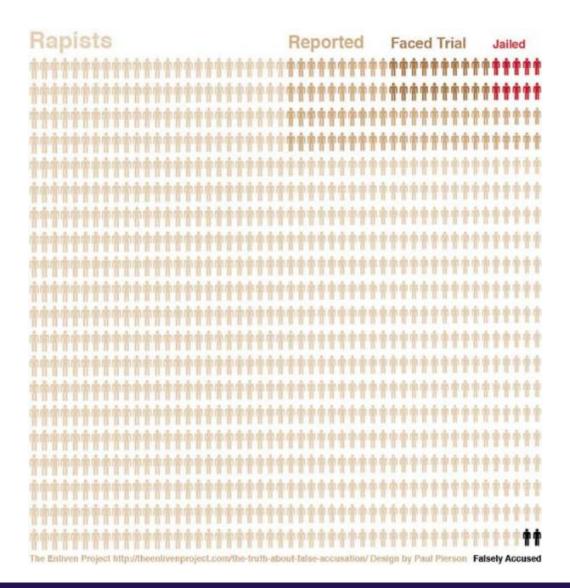
We ask that there be:

- 14. Improvement or implementation of appraisal/assessment/end of placement or employment feedback systems for staff and students to include questions on their own and others' behaviours regarding sexual misconduct and safety.
- 15. Collection of data specific to sexual misconduct including the above, by healthcare organisations, regulators and educational bodies and that these data are shared with the Implementation Panel. The CQC should have access to these data at registered organisation and national level and these should be included as a measure in an organisation's CQC rating.

Other thoughts



- Safe workforce
- Safe patients
- Education of all, including those who are accountable
- Expertise in investigation processes
- Definition of responsibilities between Trusts/ Regulators/Police
- Reduction of secondary trauma





Wilful blindness⁹ to sexual misconduct in healthcare is an institutional failure that has permitted continued unacceptable and criminal behaviour. Individuals' reports have been suppressed, those targeted have been ignored and moved elsewhere, and perpetrators have been able to continue to abuse with impunity.

Sexual misconduct by colleagues is a problem for all of healthcare including patients. It is not just about surgery and it's not just about doctors.



Thank You



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Supplemental Slides

Survey Development



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Advisors

Exeter Support Teams

Research Ethics & Governance

Legal & Insurance

Endorsement

NHS England Safeguarding

RCS England

BOTA

...etc.

Approval

HRA / HCRW

Exeter Psychology REC





Distribution

Primary

Prof. Orgs & Groups

Secondary

Social Media (Prof. Networks)

Designed Flexibility

Project Built for Adaptation & Extension

Survey Content

HRA & REC Approvals

Survey Content



- 1. Consent & Demographics
- 2. Sexual Harassment, Assault & Rape (HAR)
- 3. HAR Follow-up: Specific Incidents
- 4. Current Handling of HAR Issues
- 5. Space for Additional Input, Feedback, etc.
- 6. Open-text Consent & Debriefing

Survey Content



1. Consent & Demographics

2. Sexual Harassment, Assault & Rape (HAR)

Trigger Warning (w opt-in Q)

Definitions & Parameters

16 x HAR Items

Have you ever witnessed, overheard, or been present for...?

Have you ever been the target or victim/survivor of...?

► N x HAR Items – Past 5 Years

In the past 5 years, how often have you witnessed...?

In the past 5 years, how often have you been the target...?

➤ 3. HAR Follow-up: Specific Incidents

Respondent Demographics



$$n = 1,434$$

52.3 % NHS England employees (for weighted analyses)

Gender

51.5 % Women

Grade

63.1 % Consultant (doctor)

20.2 % Specialty Trainee

18.8 % General Surgery

Subspecialty

31.8 % Trauma & Orthopaedic

18.8 % General Surgery

HAR Follow-up: Specific Incident Qs



List of Potential Reasons for Not Reporting an Incident (Why did you not report it?)

- Didn't seem serious enough
- Seemed normal or 'acceptable' within the work culture
- Lack of adequate reporting systems (confidential, supportive, etc.)
- Didn't know how to report it
- Lack of confidence in fair outcome
- Didn't think anything would happen
- Perpetrator/s in position of power
- No witnesses
- Didn't want to rock the boat
- Fear of repercussion from institution/s
- Fear of repercussion from perpetrator/s
- Fear of not being believed
- Fear of damage to own reputation
- Fear of being accused of "overreacting"
- Worried about career development (e.g., impact on ARCP; Annual Review Competency Progression)
- Worried about impact to mental health and well-being
- Worried about ARCP (Annual Review Competency Progression) or other measure of career progression
- Other reason (please describe, if you wish):

HAR Follow-up: Specific Incident Qs



Specific Incident Questions

Location (Region)

Perpetrator/s

Gender, Race / Ethnicity

Broad Subspecialty, Work Status, Grade, Work Relationship (perp – respondent) – At Time of Incident

Respondent

Broad Subspecialty, Work Status, Grade – At Time of Incident

Reporting of Incident

(Yes)

(No)

Who did you report it to?

Why did you not report it?

Response adequately supportive?

What follow-up actions taken?

Were follow-up actions adequate?

Was the outcome: Satisfactory? Distressing / Damaging (to self, to career)

Informally Discuss Incident

With a colleague (above, at, below own grade)? Someone else (e.g., outside of work)?

Seek Professional Support

Open Text Box

Respondents



n = 1,434

52.3 % NHS England employees (for weighted analyses)

Gender

51.5 % Women

Subspecialty

31.8 % Trauma & Orthopaedic

18.8 % General Surgery

Grade

Consultant (Doctor)

63.1%

Specialty Trainee

20.2%

Trust Grade Registrar / SAS / Spec. Doctor

5.6%

Additional Analyses Underway



Are they <u>adequately</u> addressing issues of sexual harassment and assault in our profession?

Over and above gender differences, Witnessing more sexual misconduct \rightarrow lower evaluations of adequacy

Table S3. Evaluations of organisations' handling of sexual harassment and assault as a function of one's experiences with sexual misconduct

| | British Medical Association | | General Medical Council | | | | NHS Trusts | | | Royal Colleges | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|------------------|----------------------------|----------|------------------|-----------------------|---------------|------------------|--------------|-------------------|------------------|--------------|----------|------------------|--------------|
| | В | 95% CI | ${\eta_p}^2$ | В | 95% CI | ${\eta_{\text{p}}}^2$ | В | 95% CI | ${\eta_p}^2$ | В | 95% CI | ${\eta_p}^2$ | В | 95% CI | ${\eta_p}^2$ |
| Gender (0 woman, 1 man) | 1.08*** | [0.81 to 1.36] | .066 | 1.11*** | [0.83 to 1.39] | .062 | 0.95*** | [0.65 to 1.24] | .047 | 0.88*** | [0.62 to 1.14] | .044 | 0.70*** | [0.43 to 0.98] | .026 |
| Witnessing Sexual Misconduct ^a | -1.93*** | [-2.39 to -1.47] | .075 | -1.89*** | [-2.36 to -1.42] | .064 | -1.97*** | [-2.44 to -1.49] | .076 | -1.90*** | [-2.32 to -1.48] | .075 | -2.21*** | [-2.66 to -1.75] | .087 |
| Being a Target of Sexual Misconduct ^a | -0.09 | [-0.82 to 0.64] | .000 | -0.16 | [-0.94 to 0.61] | .000 | -0.47 | [-1.23 to 0.30] | .002 | -0.92** | [-1.65 to -0.19] | .006 | -0.03 | [-0.83 to 0.76] | .000 |