

How does it affect the identity of health and care professionals

We wanted to find out how professional regulation affects professional identity and whether a strong professional identity benefits patient care, so we commissioned research to explore this topic.*

Exploring the views of professionals

Professional identity

An individual's conception of themselves as a professional - is a complex construct: multiple interconnected components, with changing degrees of importance.



Components central to understanding the relationship between regulation and professional identity

A

A fundamental commitment to help/a fundamental commitment to do no harm.

B

Professional stance - a coherent way of understanding and intervening in the world, made up of more than a professional's knowledge and skills.

#1 Individual practice

Participants saw a straightforward relationship between professional identity and good patient care. A general agreement that patients benefit from a strong professional identity.

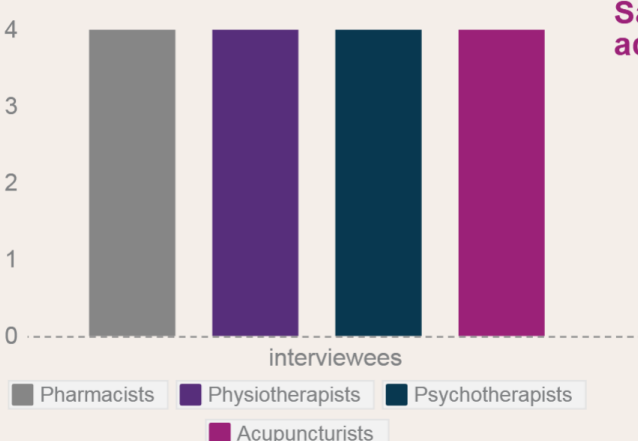
#2 Community of practice

The social dimension of professional identity - the sense of alignment with a wider community via a common register/body and the 'holding to account' aspect of this.

#3 Register benefits

Though not part of the purpose of regulation, professionals can benefit from it as both individuals and part of a group: exacting access requirements to join and stay on a register acknowledge the hard work and effort involved in developing a professional stance; it can also equip professionals with ways of differentiating themselves from others; and it can also boost social status and legitimacy of a professional group.

Sample and Methodology



Sample structure for this study addressed three classes of diversity:

- Differences between professions
- Differences within professions
- Differences across the sample

Find out more and read the full report at: www.professionalstandards.org.uk

*How does professional regulation affect the identity of health and care professionals? Exploring the views of professionals. Dr Simon Christmas, Alan Cribb (June 2017)