Press Release

MPS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

19 June 2012

Taking lessons from the aviation industry – human factors a risk in primary healthcare

The potential for human error is an important risk factor when treating patients and the need to address, understand and prevent such errors was discussed at last week's MPS GP Conference in London.

In light of the lessons and analogies that can be drawn between the aviation industry and healthcare, MPS invited former pilot and human factors expert Guy Hirst to discuss the issue of human and systems errors and how these can occur across all industries, including healthcare. Guy has broad knowledge in the area of safety improvement and risk reduction, having previously been a training captain for an airline organisation.

Dr Stephanie Bown, MPS Director of Policy and Communications says:

"Aviation has one of the best safety records of any industry in the world. The safety training that is undertaken by staff is continuous and there is a cultural acceptance that human error is normal and must be identified at the earliest opportunity to prevent avoidable harm.

"This attitude towards identifying and creating an awareness of risk is one that can be used in a multitude of work practices, none more so than the health sector, where ensuring patient safety is paramount."

Some of the suggestions Guy Hirst highlighted in helping to reduce human error included:

- Early morning briefings
- Mentorship programmes
- Protected prescription writing time
- End of day handover/debriefing sessions

For further comment or information on any of the presentations please contact Gareth Cockman, Press Officer at MPS on +44 (0)207 399 1319 or email gareth.cockman@mps.org.uk for more information.

Notes to editors:

1. *MPS General Practice Conference 2012 – Where the Risks Lie* will be taking place on the following dates: 21 June (Liverpool) and 26 June (Bristol).
2. For information on the conference programme, please see the following link: http://www.medicalprotection.org/uk/education-and-events/gp-conference
3. The London conference took place at The King's Fund, on 14 June and was attended by over 150 GPs and practice managers.
4. The conference, in its fifth year, explored where the real risks are in primary care and took an in-depth view of some specific areas of risk. Other presentations included the changing sources of risk, anatomy of a claim and dealing with challenging patient interactions.

About MPS

The Medical Protection Society is the leading provider of comprehensive professional indemnity and expert advice to doctors, dentists and health professionals around the world.

We are a mutual, not-for-profit organisation offering more than 270,000 members help with legal and ethical problems that arise from their professional practice. This includes clinical negligence claims, complaints, medical council inquiries, legal and ethical dilemmas, disciplinary procedures, inquests and fatal-accident inquiries. Fairness is at the heart of how we conduct our business. We actively protect and promote the interests of members and the wider profession. Equally, we believe that patients who have suffered harm from negligent treatment should receive fair compensation. We promote safer practice by running risk management and education programmes to reduce avoidable harm.

MPS is not an insurance company. The benefits of membership are discretionary - this allows us the flexibility to provide help and support even in unusual circumstances.

The Medical Protection Society. A company limited by guarantee. Registered in England no. 36142 at 33 Cavendish Square, London W1G 0PS