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Irish GP survey: 95% of doctors experienced work stress in last year

A Medical Protection Society (MPS) survey of over 450 Irish GPs has revealed that a staggering 95% of respondents had experienced work-related stress in the last 12 months.¹ Furthermore:

- The leading causes of stress were increased patient expectations (90%), an increasing risk of litigation (77%) and heavy workloads (75%)
- Stress had a big impact on respondents' personal lives (80%), health and wellbeing (79%), empathy towards patients (60%) and concentration (56%)
- Nearly half (49%) enjoy their jobs but recognised that changes need to be made, while stress had caused almost a third (30%) of respondents to question their careers.

Dr Mark Rowe, GP and author, will address ways to combat stress and build psychological fitness and emotional vitality by sharing his "Prescription for Happiness" at MPS's third annual General Practice Conference - *Spotlight on Risk* - in Dublin on Saturday 13 September. Around 200 GPs are expected to attend the event.

He said:

"GPs face a number of specific challenges on a daily basis, including increasing patient expectations, the risk of litigation and complaints, dealing with chronic illness, pressure to keep knowledge up to date, an unstable regulatory environment and long hours. It is therefore no surprise that they are particularly prone to stress and burnout."

Dr Rob Hendry, MPS Medical Director, said:

"MPS is increasingly seeing the effects of the provision of modern day healthcare on doctors. Stress and burnout can affect a doctor's judgement, concentration and productivity which in turn can lead to mistakes being made. Even a relatively minor error can be devastating for all those concerned, undermining the doctor-patient relationship and potentially disrupting a doctor's career.

"It's important that doctors suffering with stress get help early. Being open with colleagues and seeking support from healthcare professionals is vital.

"We are pleased to see that 77% of GPs who experienced work-related stress sought support from family and friends. Another option is to contact organisations like MPS, who can put them in touch with experts to help them deal with stress."

Ends

For further information or to arrange an interview with Dr Rowe or Dr Hendry, please contact Shannon Darling, MPS Press Officer at shannon.darling@mps.org.uk or call +44 (0) 20 7399 2019.

Notes to editor

The MPS General Practice Conference 2014 - *Spotlight on Risk* - will host a number of speakers from key medical organisations, as well as MPS medicolegal experts providing practical, relevant advice on how to reduce risk and improve patient safety.

The event will be held on Saturday 13 September at the Convention Centre in Dublin.

GPs can register at <http://www.medicalprotection.org/ireland/events/GP-conference-spotlight-on-risk> or by calling +44 113 241 0530.

¹ MPS conducted a survey of 492 Irish general practitioners in July 2014 to determine the stress that GPs experience and the impact this has.

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 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.

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