

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MPS survey reveals 46% of GPs believe patients are more violent and aggressive than five years ago

A Medical Protection Society (MPS) survey of 254 GP members reveals that 46% of GPs believe patients are more violent and aggressive than five years ago, while 35% think the situation is about the same. Worryingly, 51% of GPs have experienced violent or aggressive behaviour from patients and sadly 34% of those accepted it as part of their job.¹

Following the violent or aggressive encounter, 82% of GPs documented the incident in the patient's medical record, and 65% reported it to the practice manager, while 59% tried to resolve the matter with the patient. One in five GPs (20%) reported the incident to the police.

In dealing with violent and aggressive behaviour, support within the profession appears strong – 71% of those who had experienced such incidents received support from their colleagues, while 50% of GPs received support from practice management, however 14% did not access any support.

Dr Richenda Tisdale, Medicolegal Adviser at MPS said:

“It is understandable that patients may be anxious about their health and these emotions can be overwhelming, especially if their expectations cannot be met. However, no doctor should have to be on the receiving end of violent or aggressive behaviour as a result.

“It is alarming that 34% of GPs who had experienced violence accepted it as part of their job; but heartening that they received support from colleagues and practice managers after the event. It is important that doctors are able to practice free from the fear of violence and aggression in a safe, supportive environment.

“Only 4% of respondents had not experienced a violent patient over the past five years, which is a very worrying statistic. The NHS has a zero tolerance policy but we believe more support from NHS England is needed to empower practices and acknowledge the impact this has on the profession at a time when we are facing a recruitment and retention problem.”

ENDS

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Notes to Editor:

¹ The Medical Protection Society conducted a survey of 254 UK GP members on the issue of ‘challenging interactions with patients.’ The survey was active from Thursday 21 May 2015 – Thursday 4 June 2015.

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 300,000 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.

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