

SLHD Clinical Quality Council

SLHD Medical Accreditation Report – July 2024

Situation

This Report summarises the key findings of the 2023 Annual Medical Training Survey (MTS) of Doctors-in-Training in relation to Sydney Local Health District (SLHD) training sites and provides an update on progress relating to key focus areas of the SLHD MTS Action Plan.

Background

The 2023 Medical Training Survey is an annual, nation-wide survey of Doctors-in-Training managed by the Medical Board of Australia and the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) and conducted during the annual medical registration renewal period from August to September each year. The Survey obtains feedback about training using workplace-based domains of orientation, clinical supervision, access to teaching, facilities, workplace environment and culture and patient safety. It also gathers information on curriculum and assessment (which form some of the basis of reporting on speciality medical colleges) and domains related to overall satisfaction and future career intentions.

Survey results generate significant interest among Trainees, jurisdictions and specialist medical colleges, and may also influence Doctors-in-Training determining their preferred workplace.

In 2023, the MTS was conducted for the fifth consecutive year, and more than 23,000 Doctors-in-Training participated, a number equivalent to around 54% of the total Australian cohort. Changes to the MTS in 2023 reflected evolving workforce priorities and included questions relating to flexible work practices, carer responsibilities and disability status.

Based on the results of the 2022 MTS, the SLHD MTS Action Plan identifies four priorities and immediate and long-term goals for enhancing the experience of SLHD Doctors-in-Training. This Report to the SLHD Clinical Quality Council summarises the 2023 MTS outcomes and describes progress in advancing the four priorities identified in the SLHD MTS Action Plan.

Assessment

In SLHD, 431 Doctors-in-Training employed at Canterbury, Concord Repatriation General and Royal Prince Alfred Hospitals responded to the 2023 MTS (noting there were not enough respondents who identified as employees of Balmain Hospital to be included in the analysis). The breakdown of Junior Medical Officer positions represented were Interns (8%), Resident Medical Officers (27%), Trainees in positions accredited by Specialist Medical Colleges (52%), Trainees in Unaccredited Positions (7%) and Other (4%).

Key achievements relating to orientation, supervision, access to teaching, patient safety, overtime practices and bullying and harassment include:

Percentage of SLHD Doctors-in-Training that:	2022	2023	Change
Orientation			
Received an informal or formal orientation to their workplace	-	94%	-
Described the quality of this orientation as good or excellent	72%	75%	+ 3%
Supervision			
Described the quality of clinical supervision as good or excellent	-	88%	-
Access to Teaching			
Agreed that the quality of their teaching sessions is good or excellent	--	83%	-
Felt their workplace supports them to attend formal teaching sessions	-	80%	-
Patient Safety			
Rated the quality of training on how to raise concerns about patient safety in their workplace as good or excellent	79%	82%	+ 3%
Felt confident to raise concerns about patient care and safety	89%	89%	-

Overtime Practices			
Reported they were paid for the unrostered overtime they worked most, or all of the time	64%	78%	+ 14%
Bullying and Harassment			
Reported experiencing bullying, harassment, or discrimination	27%	23%	- 4%
Reported witnessing bullying, harassment, or discrimination	32%	26%	- 8%
Indicated instances of experienced bullying, harassment or discrimination were followed up	27%	50%	+ 23%

The results of the 2023 MTS also reveal some areas for further development. When prompted on access to teaching, 45% SLHD Doctors-in-Training said their job responsibilities sometimes or often prevented them from meeting their training requirements, while 50% felt they had to compete with other doctors for access to opportunities. Results also indicate that Trainees remain concerned for their training and work security, although to a lesser extent in 2023, with 50% concerned about obtaining employment upon conclusion of training (a decrease of 8% since 2022).

SLHD will also continue to closely monitor Trainee welfare in relation to workplace bullying and harassment. In 2023, 23% SLHD respondents reported experiencing bullying, harassment, or discrimination (a decrease of 4% since 2022), and 26% reported witnessing it (a decrease of 8% since 2022). Most notably, the percentage of these instances of experienced bullying, harassment or discrimination that were indicated to have been followed up is 50% (an increase of 23% since 2022).

Overall, SLHD training sites remained attractive places to work and train in 2023, with 79% of SLHD Doctors-in-Training indicating they would recommend their workplace and current training position to a colleague. This is slightly higher than the NSW average.

SLHD Medical Training Survey Action Plan

In acknowledgement of its standing as one of the most robust surveys of Doctors-in-Training and its extensive data collection on a range of workplace and training domains, SLHD Executive Medical Services undertook a body of work to develop the first SLHD MTS Action Plan. Published in 2023 in response to the 2022 survey findings, it outlines immediate and long-term goals for four key focus areas to enhance the experience of SLHD Doctors-in-Training.

Developments in these key focus areas are described below:

Training Plans for Trainees in Unaccredited Positions

The SLHD Trainees in Unaccredited Positions Working Group is an expert group overseeing the SLHD Trainees in Unaccredited Positions Strategy and initiatives such as Training Plans for Trainees in Unaccredited Positions. This was identified as a key focus area in response to 45% SLHD respondents belonging to this cohort who indicated they did not have a training or professional development plan. Under the guidance of the Working Group and with introduction of new National continuing professional development (CPD) registration requirements, progress in this area is being made.

Following Chief Executive support and approval in 2023, the first dedicated Directors of Trainees in Unaccredited Positions were appointed for an initial period of twelve months to Royal Prince Alfred, Canterbury and Concord Repatriation General Hospitals, ensuring that every Junior Medical Officer in SLHD has a nominated Director of Training guiding for their training. The Directors of Trainees in Unaccredited Positions have been instrumental in communicating with and providing advice to Trainees about their training plans (also referred to as a professional development plans) and the need to enrol in a CPD Home that aligns with their professional interests, both of which are now mandatory medical registration requirements.

Evaluation of the pilot of the Directors of Trainees in Unaccredited Positions role is underway and the number of Trainees in Unaccredited Positions with training plans will be a key success consideration.

Term Supervisor Support

In SLHD, each Senior Medical Officer is a clinical supervisor of other doctors-in-training. Identification of “Term Supervisor Support” is a key focus area in the SLHD MTS Action Plan, including to ensure that Supervisors have access to professional development opportunities that support high-quality supervision practices. Clinical Supervisors are being identified across SLHD medical departments. During a series of consultations, including at the Medical Accreditation and Training workshop planned in the second half of 2024, feedback from clinicians regarding their perceived training and professional development needs will be collated and new initiatives implemented to complement existing professional development opportunities such as the SLHD Head of Department Twilight Series.

Fostering a Culture of Appreciation

The statistically significant increase in the percentage of Trainees who felt that a lack of appreciation adversely affected their wellbeing was a notable finding of the 2022 MTS, and ‘Fostering a Culture of Appreciation’ was one of four key focus areas identified in the SLHD MTS Action Plan. Promisingly, a statistically significant decrease in this percentage was recorded in 2023 (20%), however the concept of “appreciation” as a contributor to workplace culture remains of key interest.

To identify factors influencing perceptions of appreciation by the workforce, SLHD Executive Medical Services commenced a body of research, the preliminary phase of which involved a series of focus groups with Junior Medical Officers from SLHD training sites and members of My District OK (MDOK) to determine the most appropriate method of evaluation. Pending ethics approval (anticipated mid-August 2024), Junior Medical Officers will be invited to participate in an anonymous survey aimed to evaluate the extent of perceived appreciation in the workplace and identifying strategies that could potentially increase perceived appreciation among doctors. The results and recommendations will be presented to SLHD Directors Medical Services, Doctors-in-Training Committees and peak governance committees such as the SLHD Clinical Quality Council.

Access to Targeted Education

Longitudinal Medical Training Survey results indicate SLHD consistently performs well in relation to teaching and education, however, an area flagged for specific attention was access to address feedback from 39% of SLHD respondents who indicated that their job responsibilities sometimes prevent them from meeting training requirements. Goals to progress this key focus area include identification of pre-existing Hospital and Departmental education sessions and feedback from Junior Medical Officers to identify barriers to attending sessions. Distribution of this survey will be scheduled around other key surveys of Doctors-in-Training (including the upcoming questionnaire on appreciation) to maximise engagement and participation rates. In preparation, a draft questionnaire is currently being reviewed by key stakeholders, including Trainees, Directors of Training and MDOK representatives.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the SLHD Clinical Quality Council notes outcomes of the 2023 Medical Training Survey, including significant achievements in the areas of orientation, supervision, access to teaching and patient safety, and progress in furthering the four key focus areas identified in the SLHD MTS Action Plan.

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