

Practitioner Performance Advice Insights

Surgeons who are the subject of our cases

May 2021

In March 2021, the Royal College of Surgeons (RCS) published *An independent review on diversity and inclusion for the Royal College of Surgeons of England*. Much of the report looks at diversity in relation to the structure of the RCS but it also explores issues around diversity in surgeons more widely.

We have taken this opportunity to review some of the information we hold on cases discussed with us which relate to surgeons to understand if similar issues highlighted in the RCS report are apparent in our cases and are relevant to the services we offer to help employers and practitioners to resolve concerns about individuals' performance where they arise. These cases relate to surgeons of any grade working or training in a surgical specialty.

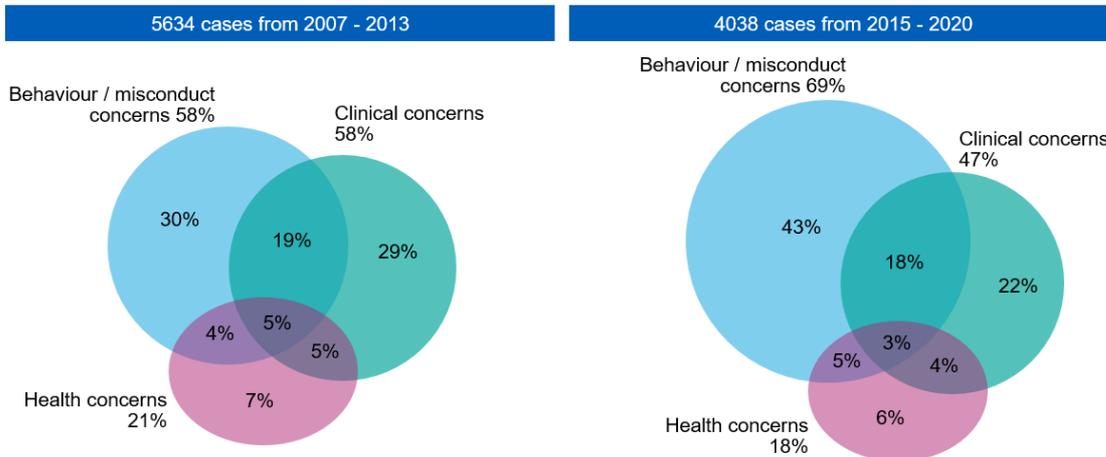
Our findings

A quarter of all Advice cases for doctors in secondary care involved a doctor in the surgery group (between FY 2015/16 and 2019/20).

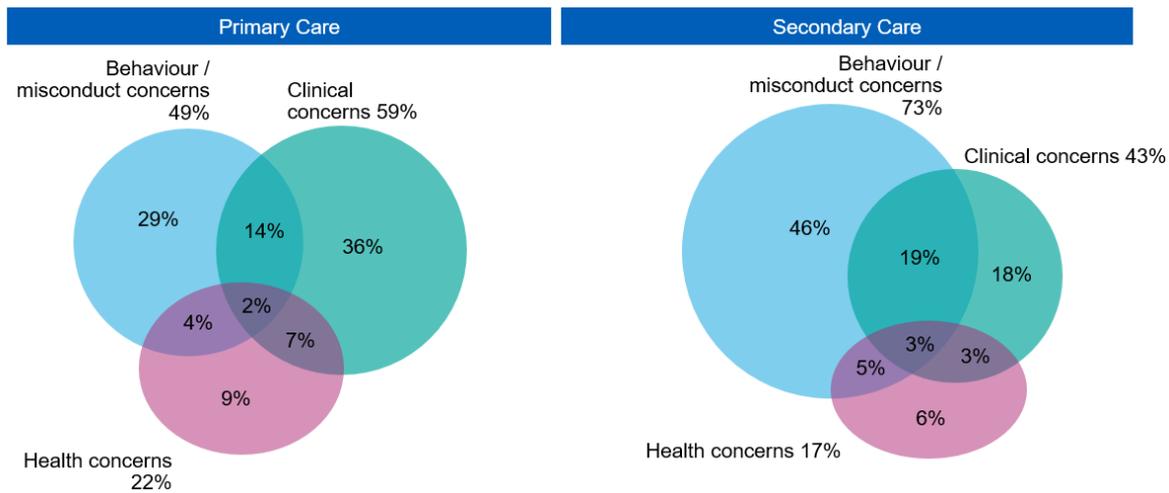
In common with all specialties, International Medical Graduates (IMGs) in surgical groups are over-represented compared to the wider population of medical doctors. For surgeons, just over 50% of cases related to IMGs compared to the 21.3% of surgeons being IMGs cited in the RCS report.

Of the surgeons in our cases, 88% were male which is only slightly higher than the percentage of surgeons who are male. Overall, male doctors tend to be relatively over-represented in cases discussed with us.

Looking at cases across all practitioners (including a small number of dentists and pharmacists), there has been an increase in the proportion of cases where their employer has cited a concern which relates to behaviour/misconduct. Whilst we cannot be certain as to whether this relates to increasing awareness of these issues and willingness to understand and resolve them, or whether it relates to a real change in behaviours, it does correlate with our experience of receiving increasing number of requests for behavioural interventions such as behavioural assessments, workplace-based mediations and team reviews.



In secondary care the proportion of cases presenting with concerns about behavioural/misconduct is higher and surgeons do not appear to differ significantly from other secondary care practitioners.



Recent analysis of our cases between 2015 and 2020 indicates that doctors from ethnic minority groups and those who qualified outside the UK are over-represented in our cases when compared to the number of doctors on the Medical Register, in line with other findings elsewhere from the NHS ([A fair experience for all: Closing the ethnicity gap in rates of disciplinary action across the NHS workforce](#)) and General Medical Council ([Fair to Refer?](#)).

We are committed to furthering our understanding of the lived experience of practitioners and managers who bring cases to Advice to guide the continuous improvement of the service. We will shortly be embarking on a piece of qualitative research focused on understanding this important area further, which will include the perspectives and experiences of individual practitioners from ethnic minority backgrounds and/or who are IMGs. The research forms part of our wider programme of work on matters of equality, diversity and inclusion. This research will allow us to continue to improve how we manage

cases and help us interact with practitioners in a more compassionate way by ensuring they feel heard, supported and understood. For more information about this work, please email us at Advice.ResearchAndEvaluation@resolution.nhs.uk.

We will also be undertaking a more detailed analysis of behavioural and conduct issues reported to us.

See below for more information on our services that relate to behavioural concerns about practitioners:

- [Behavioural assessments](#)
- [Professional support and remediation](#)
- [Team reviews](#)
- [Workplace-based mediations](#)

- The RCS report can be found [here](#).

Our *Insights* publications share analysis and research which draw on our in-depth experience providing expert, impartial advice and interventions to healthcare organisations. By sharing these insights, we aim to support the healthcare system to better understand, manage and resolve concerns about doctors, dentists or pharmacists. You can find all past reports [here](#).

If you are interested in hearing more about our research and insights programme, please get in touch with us at Advice.ResearchAndEvaluation@resolution.nhs.uk.

If you'd like to learn more about our work and the services we offer, please visit our dedicated [Practitioner Performance Advice webpages](#). Our Education service offers [training courses](#) to provide healthcare organisations with the knowledge and skills to identify and manage performance concerns locally.