

# Non UK qualified doctors and Good Medical Practice: The experience of working within a different professional framework. *Anne Slowther et al.*

## Rationale

Previous work suggests that ethical decision making varies across different cultures. The UK has a high number of Non UK qualified doctors working in its health care system.

All doctors working in the UK are required to comply with Good Medical Practice (GMP). Study commissioned to assist the GMC identify how best to help non UK qualified doctors understand and apply GMP and other ethical guidance in their daily practice.

The aim was to explore the experience of Non UK qualified doctors in working within the ethical regulatory framework of GMP and to make recommendations to the GMC based on the findings.

## Methodology

A mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods were used to understand the knowledge and practice of Non UK qualified doctors. Participants were drawn from doctors who registered between 1 April 2006 and 31 March 2008 and were stratified on the basis of country of qualification.

Interviews with 26 doctors and focus groups with 12 doctors were conducted. A topic guide was followed and the following 4 specific areas were focussed on:

- Consent
- Decisions about end of life care

- Confidentiality
- Dealing with concerns about poor practice

Questionnaires were completed by 106 non UK qualified doctors and 30 UK qualified doctors to facilitate a comparison between their experiences.

Key informants involved in the training and support of Non UK qualified doctors were interviewed to provide a further perspective.

A web search was also conducted, to search for information available for doctors who have qualified overseas in relation to ethical and professional practice, and how easily accessible the information is.

## Implications/conclusions drawn for the GMC

**Key Finding:** The emphasis on shared decision making between doctor and patient differs between Non UK qualifiers and UK qualifiers.

### Recommendations for the GMC:

- Development of a web based portal for ethics information prior to registration for Non UK qualified doctors.
- Development of specific resources to support Non UK qualified doctors in practice, including information about the cultural context of the UK professional regulatory framework.
- Provision of appropriate, formal induction for Non UK qualified doctors, including the legal, ethical and social context of healthcare in the UK.
- Further development of mentorship schemes during first 2 years of employment.

## Applying the findings

- Clearer signposting on the GMC website to:
  - ethical guidance, with explanation of the context in which it was developed and key differences in the UK approach (e.g. the focus on patient autonomy and choice in guidance on consent and confidentiality)
  - *GMP in Action* – an interactive learning tool developed to help doctors see how the guidance applies in practice.
- Promotion of GMP in Action and ethical guidance via websites, newsletters and at events of organisations supporting doctors qualified outside the UK.

The report and further details are available on our website [www.gmc-uk.org](http://www.gmc-uk.org) or from Nicola Costin-Davis on [NCostinDavis@gmc-uk.org](mailto:NCostinDavis@gmc-uk.org)

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