

Expert Advisory Group advising the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons Discrimination, Bullying and Sexual Harassment Survey

Dear Fellows, Trainees and International Medical Graduates (IMGs),

As you know the College is actively responding to recent reports of discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment in the health sector. As Chair of the independent Expert Advisory Group (EAG) which has been established by the College to examine these issues, I am writing to seek your assistance in completing a survey that will provide valuable information on the prevalence of this behaviour in workplaces.

The questions asked in this survey relate to your own experience and the experiences of others in being subjected to and responding to discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment in your workplaces. The survey has been designed to assist the EAG in gaining an overall perspective of the experiences of Fellows, Trainees and IMGs; training and education currently in place in health services; and importantly how the College can better address and develop resources to deal with this behaviour. Even if you have not personally experienced discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment your participation in the survey is still extremely valuable as it will ensure that a diverse and accurate representative sample is obtained.

Independent survey

An independent company, Best Practice Australia (BPA), has been engaged to conduct the survey and compile the results – this ensures all participants that personal and organisational information will remain completely confidential and anonymous. If you want to view BPA's Privacy and Confidentiality policy, visit http://www.bpanz.com/page/Privacy_Policy/. Information provided in this survey should therefore be general, please refrain from mentioning any names, or identifying characteristics of any individuals or organisations. The survey results will be used to formulate an independent and completely de-identified report which will inform the strategic recommendations of the EAG. The final report will be made available to all Fellows, Trainees and IMGs of the College upon completion.

Confidential support

The EAG and the College recognise the sensitivity associated with these issues and that participation in this survey may be uncomfortable or distressing for individuals. The College encourages anyone who requires assistance to contact Converge International who provides confidential support to surgeons and their family members. This can be for any personal or work related matter. Converge counsellors are experienced in working with individuals in the medical profession.

- Support is confidential and private
- Four free sessions per calendar year are offered
- Assistance can be provided face to face, via telephone or online
- Services are available throughout Australia and New Zealand

How to contact Converge International:

- Telephone 1300 687 327 in Australia or 0800 666 367 in New Zealand
- Email eap@convergeintl.com.au
- Identify yourself as a Fellow, Trainee or IMG of RACS
- Appointments are available from 8:30am to 6:00pm Mon-Fri (excluding public holiday)
- 24/7 Emergency telephone counselling is available

Your help in completing this survey will be invaluable to building a representative picture of the effects of discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment and its consequences. The overall aim of the EAG and the College in engaging in this survey and other processes is to develop more effective strategies aimed at preventing instances of discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment. It is our hope that this will ensure that surgeons and all health professionals have access to appropriate support and that every workplace is both an equitable and inclusive environment.

Thank you once again for your assistance. **Please complete and post your survey by Tuesday 9th June 2015.** A reply paid envelope is enclosed.

Hon Rob Knowles AO
Chair, EAG

Dr Helen Szoke
Deputy Chair, EAG

This survey has received ethics approval in accordance with the NHMRC Human Research Ethics Guidelines. This Ethics Application 34 was approved by the RACS Ethics Committee (EC00287). If you have any questions or concerns about this project, please contact the Ethics Committee Secretariat on (03) 9276 7446 or via email at Ethics@surgeons.org.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Q1. What best describes your status with the College? (please tick)

- Registered SET trainee IMG on the pathway to Fellowship Fellow < 10 years post FRACS (i.e. a younger Fellow) Fellow > 10 years post FRACS

If you are a SET trainee, how many years have you been in the training program? years

Q2. Which of the following roles do you hold? (please tick as many as apply)

- Department Head or Divisional Director Clinical Assessor of IMGs Surgeon Non-clinical role
 Trainee Supervisor Surgical Consultant Trainee Other

Q3. What is your specialty? (please tick)

- Cardiothoracic Surgery Orthopaedic Surgery Paediatric Surgery Urology
 General Surgery Otolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery Vascular Surgery
 Neurosurgery Other

Q4. What is your gender? (please tick)

- Male Female Other

Q5. What is your age? (please tick)

- < 30 years 41-45 years 56-60 years > 70 years
 31-35 years 46-50 years 61-65 years
 36-40 years 51-55 years 66-70 years

Q6. Have you ever been subject to any of the following behaviours in the workplace: Discrimination, Bullying, Sexual Harassment or Harassment? NO → **Go to Q20.**
 YES

If Yes, please complete the questions in the relevant columns below.

DISCRIMINATION

BULLYING

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

HARASSMENT

Q7. Have you ever been subjected to this behaviour in the workplace?

No → **Go to the next column**
 Yes
↓

No → **Go to the next column**
 Yes
↓

No → **Go to the next column**
 Yes
↓

No → **Go to Q16 on page 9**
 Yes
↓

Q8. Please describe the behaviour you experienced, but do not name specific individuals.

Please describe ...

Please describe ...

Please describe ...

Please describe ...

Q9. Please indicate how frequently this behaviour occurred.

- One-off event
- On two or three occasions
- On more than three occasions

- One-off event
- On two or three occasions
- On more than three occasions

- One-off event
- On two or three occasions
- On more than three occasions

- One-off event
- On two or three occasions
- On more than three occasions

Q10. When do you consider that you last experienced this behaviour?
If multiple instances, when did the last episode occur?

- In the last 6 months
- Between 6 months and 1 year ago
- Between 1 and 2 years ago
- Between 2 and 5 years ago
- More than 5 years ago

- In the last 6 months
- Between 6 months and 1 year ago
- Between 1 and 2 years ago
- Between 2 and 5 years ago
- More than 5 years ago

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- Between 6 months and 1 year ago
- Between 1 and 2 years ago
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- More than 5 years ago

DISCRIMINATION

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**SEXUAL
HARASSMENT**

HARASSMENT

Q11. Specifically concerning this behaviour ...

Have you experienced any of these behaviours, which you believe were because of your gender?

(tick as many as apply)

- Being denied operating lists
- Excluded from meetings directly related to your role
- Being assigned meaningless tasks unrelated to your role
- Excluded from social events where other colleagues had been invited
- Being denied a promotion
- Being denied training opportunities
- Hurtful and humiliating comments made about or towards you
- Any other detriment (please specify)

Have you ever been the recipient of any of these behaviours in the workplace? (tick as many as apply)

- Inappropriate physical contact
- Persistent requests for dates
- Unwelcome sexual flirtations
- Demands for sexual favours
- Leering or graphic comments about my body
- Sexually explicit or offensive jokes
- Display of sexually suggestive photos, videos, emails, text messages
- Questions or insinuations about my sexual or private life
- Sexual Assault
- Rape
- Other (please specify)

DISCRIMINATION

Q12. Which of the following persons displayed this behaviour against you?
(tick as many as apply)

- Surgical Consultant
- Other Medical consultant
- Trainee
- Nursing Staff
- Allied Health Professional
- Medical Administration Staff
- Hospital Administration Staff
- Other (please specify)

Q13. What was the gender of the person who displayed this behaviour against you?

- Male
- Female
- Other

Q14. What was the geographic location where this behaviour took place?

- New Zealand
- Australian Capital Territory
- New South Wales
- Northern Territory
- Queensland
- South Australia
- Tasmania
- Victoria
- Western Australia

BULLYING

- Surgical Consultant
- Other Medical consultant
- Trainee
- Nursing Staff
- Allied Health Professional
- Medical Administration Staff
- Hospital Administration Staff
- Other (please specify)

- Male
- Female
- Other

- New Zealand
- Australian Capital Territory
- New South Wales
- Northern Territory
- Queensland
- South Australia
- Tasmania
- Victoria
- Western Australia

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

- Surgical Consultant
- Other Medical consultant
- Trainee
- Nursing Staff
- Allied Health Professional
- Medical Administration Staff
- Hospital Administration Staff
- Other (please specify)

- Male
- Female
- Other

- New Zealand
- Australian Capital Territory
- New South Wales
- Northern Territory
- Queensland
- South Australia
- Tasmania
- Victoria
- Western Australia

HARASSMENT

- Surgical Consultant
- Other Medical consultant
- Trainee
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- Allied Health Professional
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- Hospital Administration Staff
- Other (please specify)

- Male
- Female
- Other

- New Zealand
- Australian Capital Territory
- New South Wales
- Northern Territory
- Queensland
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- Tasmania
- Victoria
- Western Australia

Q15. Did you seek to address this behaviour in any of the following ways?
(If yes, tick as many as apply)

DISCRIMINATION

- No, I didn't want to Go to Q18. →**
- No, I wasn't able to at the time Go to Q18. →**
- Yes, addressed it directly with the person
- Yes, brought to the attention of my supervisor or my manager
- Yes, made an informal or formal complaint to Human Resources in the workplace (hospital, etc.)
- Yes, made a formal complaint with an external agency
- Yes, spoke to my employer's counselling service
- Yes, made a complaint to the College of Surgeons
- Yes, discussed it with a peer
- Yes, discussed it with a senior colleague or mentor
- Yes, discussed with family, friends or personal network
- Yes, discussed with a lawyer or legal service
- Yes, discussed with a union or employee representative
- Yes, referred it to the police

Any comments you would like to make?

BULLYING

- No, I didn't want to Go to Q18. →**
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- Yes, discussed it with a senior colleague or mentor
- Yes, discussed with family, friends or personal network
- Yes, discussed with a lawyer or legal service
- Yes, discussed with a union or employee representative
- Yes, referred it to the police

Any comments you would like to make?

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

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HARASSMENT

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- Yes, referred it to the police

Any comments you would like to make?

DISCRIMINATION

BULLYING

**SEXUAL
HARASSMENT**

HARASSMENT

Q16. What was the result of the action/s you took as identified above? (in Q15)
(tick as many as apply)

- Complaint has not yet been finalised
- Complaint was not progressed by receiving body
- I withdrew my complaint
- I received an apology
- I received compensation
- My employer made changes to the workplace to prevent this behaviour in the future
- This behaviour stopped
- This behaviour continued
- I was victimised for making a complaint
- I left my job
- Police investigation conducted
- Other (please specify)

- Complaint has not yet been finalised
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- This behaviour stopped
- This behaviour continued
- I was victimised for making a complaint
- I left my job
- Police investigation conducted
- Other (please specify)

Q17. Has this behaviour been resolved to your satisfaction?

- Yes
- Not sure
- No

- Yes
- Not sure
- No

- Yes
- Not sure
- No

- Yes
- Not sure
- No

DISCRIMINATION

BULLYING

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HARASSMENT**

HARASSMENT

Q18. Did you experience any of the following as potential barriers in your decision about whether to take action or not?
(tick as many as apply)

- Effect on future career options
- Potential for victimisation
- Concern of not being believed or taken seriously by management
- Loss of reputation for self
- Loss of reputation for perpetrator
- Fear of being blamed
- Loss of support from supervisors, colleagues, friends, partner, family
- The stress associated with filing a complaint and enduring an investigation
- None of the above
- Other (please specify)

- Effect on future career options
- Potential for victimisation
- Concern of not being believed or taken seriously by management
- Loss of reputation for self
- Loss of reputation for perpetrator
- Fear of being blamed
- Loss of support from supervisors, colleagues, friends, partner, family
- The stress associated with filing a complaint and enduring an investigation
- None of the above
- Other (please specify)

- Effect on future career options
- Potential for victimisation
- Concern of not being believed or taken seriously by management
- Loss of reputation for self
- Loss of reputation for perpetrator
- Fear of being blamed
- Loss of support from supervisors, colleagues, friends, partner, family
- The stress associated with filing a complaint and enduring an investigation
- None of the above
- Other (please specify)

- Effect on future career options
- Potential for victimisation
- Concern of not being believed or taken seriously by management
- Loss of reputation for self
- Loss of reputation for perpetrator
- Fear of being blamed
- Loss of support from supervisors, colleagues, friends, partner, family
- The stress associated with filing a complaint and enduring an investigation
- None of the above
- Other (please specify)

Q19. In hindsight, what is one thing that could have been done differently that would have made it safer or easier for you to take action on this behaviour?

ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

Q20. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements (by ticking the 1-6 rating scale).

At my current workplace (your main workplace if you have more than one) ...

There is a supportive and inclusive culture that deals effectively with discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment.

The surgical department heads and surgical supervisors deal effectively with people who display discrimination, bullying or sexual harassment.

The Hospital Executive deal effectively with persons who are displaying discrimination, bullying or sexual harassment.

Surgeons understand the difference between reasonable performance management/feedback measures and discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment.

Female surgeons are treated fairly.

Strongly Agree Agree Somewhat Agree Somewhat Disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree

1 2 3 4 5 6

1 2 3 4 5 6

1 2 3 4 5 6

1 2 3 4 5 6

1 2 3 4 5 6

1 to 6 Rating Scale is:

- 1 Strongly Agree
- 2 Agree
- 3 Somewhat Agree
- 4 Somewhat Disagree
- 5 Disagree
- 6 Strongly Disagree

Q21. Do you believe that reporting discrimination, bullying or sexual harassment from surgeons would have negative ramifications for you?

(tick as many as apply)

- No
- Yes, from colleagues
- Yes, from the hospital
- Yes, from RACS (supervisors, end-of-term reports, choice of rotations)
- Yes, other (please specify) _____

Q22. Would you advise a current workplace colleague (at your main workplace) who has been subject to discrimination, bullying or sexual harassment to file a formal complaint? (tick as many as apply)

- Yes
- Maybe, if they had strong evidence
- No, the resolution process is inadequate
- No, they would be ostracised by their colleagues
- No, it would affect their future career options
- No, because of potential for retaliation or further discrimination, bullying or sexual harassment from the perpetrator
- No, other (please specify) _____

GENDER EQUITY

Gender equity is achieved when people are able to access and enjoy the same rewards, resources and opportunities regardless of whether they are a woman or a man.

Q23. What steps has your current employer (main workplace) taken to promote gender equity and display clear opposition to gender discrimination in the workplace?

(tick as many as apply)

- Has a workplace policy on discrimination, sexual harassment and victimisation
- Has a workplace policy on equal opportunity and gender equity
- Has an effective complaint and grievance procedure
- Provides information about discrimination, sexual harassment and victimisation to new employees as part of the induction process
- Provides training for employees on equity, discrimination, sexual harassment and victimisation in the workplace
- Has a designated person or contact officer whom employees can speak to if they have any concerns regarding discrimination, sexual harassment and victimisation in the workplace
- Provides flexible working arrangements
- None of the above

Q24. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statement (by ticking the 1-6 rating scale).

My current workplace (main workplace if more than one) is supportive of female surgeons and trainees.



The College is supportive of female surgeons and trainees.



Specialty Societies are supportive of female surgeons and trainees.



Q25. Have you ever made a request for your current employer to accommodate your responsibilities as a parent or carer (for example, by requesting flexible working arrangements?)

- Yes No

If yes, what was the outcome of your request for accommodation of your responsibilities as a parent or carer?

- My request was approved
- My request was partially approved
- My request was considered but not approved
- My request was immediately refused
- Other (please specify) _____

TRAINING AND IMPROVEMENTS

Q26. In the last 5 years, have you attended training on how to deal with discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment (from individuals) in your current workplace? (tick as many as apply)

- Yes, at my hospital/health service
- Yes, private provider
- Yes, with the College of Surgeons
- Yes, with my Specialty society
- No

Q27. Have you attended any of the following College of Surgeons courses?
(tick as many as apply)

- Supervisors and Trainers for SET (SAT SET)
- Keeping Trainees on Track (KTOT)
- Surgical Teachers Course (STC)
- Process Communication Model (PCM)
- Non-Technical Skills for Surgeons (NOTSS)
- Safer Australian Surgical Teams (SAS)
- Training in Professional Skills (TIPS)

Q28. Do you believe that you are equipped with the skills to effectively respond ...

If **you** are subjected to discrimination, bullying or sexual harassment? Yes No

If **others** are subjected to discrimination, bullying or sexual harassment? Yes No

Q29. What action do you think is required to assist in the prevention of discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment within your current workplace?

(tick as many as apply)

- Further training from hospital/health service on discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment
- Further training from the College of Surgeons on discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment
- Resources to support more effective complaint and resolution procedures in the workplace
- Better support mechanisms (e.g. counselling and resolution services)
- Greater leadership by surgical department heads and surgical supervisors
- Other (please specify)

Q30. Do you have any suggestions for other ways in which the College of Surgeons could help in ensuring that your current workplace is free from discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment?

Yes No

please specify

Q31. Do you have any suggestions for other ways in which the College of Surgeons could better support Fellows, Trainees and IMGs in being equipped to personally address discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment?

Yes No

please specify

MESSAGE TO THE EXPERT ADVISORY GROUP (EAG)

The Expert Advisory Group (EAG) consists of 7 members:

- *Hon Rob Knowles AO* (Chair)
previous Minister of Health in Victoria and current Chair of the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne.
- *Dr Helen Szoke* (Deputy Chair)
CEO of Oxfam; previous Australian Federal Race Discrimination Commissioner and Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commissioner.
- *Mr Graeme Campbell*
General Surgeon, Bendigo, Victoria, incoming College Vice President.
- *Dr Cathy Ferguson*
Otolaryngology Head and Neck Surgeon, Wellington, New Zealand, incoming Chair of Professional Standards.
- *Dr Joanna Flynn AM*
Chair of the Medical Board of Australia and Chair of Eastern Health Victoria.
- *Mr Ken Lay*
APM, Previous Chief Commissioner of Police in Victoria.
- *Dame Judith Potter*
DNZM, CBE, Previous High Court Judge.

Q32. Reflecting on the issues canvassed in this survey, if there was one message you would like to pass on to the EAG, it would be ...

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

This survey has received ethics approval in accordance with the NHMRC Human Research Ethics Guidelines. This Ethics Application 34 was approved by the RACS Ethics Committee (EC00287). If you have any questions or concerns about this project, please contact the Ethics Committee Secretariat on (03) 9276 7446 or via email at Ethics@surgeons.org.

You are also invited to contribute your personal stories and thoughts about discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment. The Expert Advisory Group has engaged Converge International, an independent agency, to collect and analyse this information.

*For more information on the different ways (including online) in which you can share your experience go to:
<http://www.surgeons.org/about/expert-advisory-group/sharing-experiences/>*

*or alternatively to make an appointment to speak to the independent external provider directly please call:
In Western Australia: call 1300 687 327 from 9am to 3pm local time
In other Australian states: call 1300 687 327 from 9am to 4pm local time
In New Zealand: call 0800 666 367 from 11am to 6pm local time*