Abstract citation ID: ckac129.044
Hospital doctors in Ireland working through COVID-19 pandemic: learning from individual experience

Niamh Humphries

N Humphries1, J-P Byrne1, J Creese2
1RCSI Graduate School of Healthcare Management, Dublin, Ireland
2College of Life Sciences, University of Leicester, Leicester, UK
Contact: rhumphries@rcsi.ie

Background:
This study was part of a 5-year, HRB-funded research project about hospital doctor retention and emigration.

Methods:
In 2021, we conducted a Mobile Instant Messaging Ethnography (MIME) with 28 hospital doctors in Ireland. This involved interviewing doctors via Zoom and engaging them in a 12-week work-related conversation via WhatsApp.

Results:
Our findings illustrate that the pandemic intensified already difficult working conditions. Respondents described working in an under-staffed and under-resourced system, in which they were unable to protect their own wellbeing or achieve a work-life balance. Morale was low and few had hope of health system improvement.

Conclusions:
The findings reveal a workforce under strain and raise concerns about health worker wellbeing and health worker attrition, post-pandemic. However, they also highlight the importance (and value) of listening to the voices of frontline health workers and using their insights to inform and enhance retention policies.