Promote & Encourage Exception Reporting (PEER) Quality Improvement Project

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Introduction

In 2016, NHS England introduced Exception Reporting in the 'Junior Doctors and Dentists in Training' contract. This is a process whereby doctors inform their employer when "their day-to-day work varies significantly and/or regularly from the agreed work schedule" and can receive pay and other resolutions. Understaffing concerns are also highlighted to facilitate appropriate resource allocation.

Our aim is to improve the proportion of junior doctors in North West Anglia Foundation Trust (NWAFT) who understand how to Exception Report and complete the practice. Additionally, we aim to understand why doctors choose not to Exception Report, and the impact of overtime working on staff and perceived patient safety.

Methodology

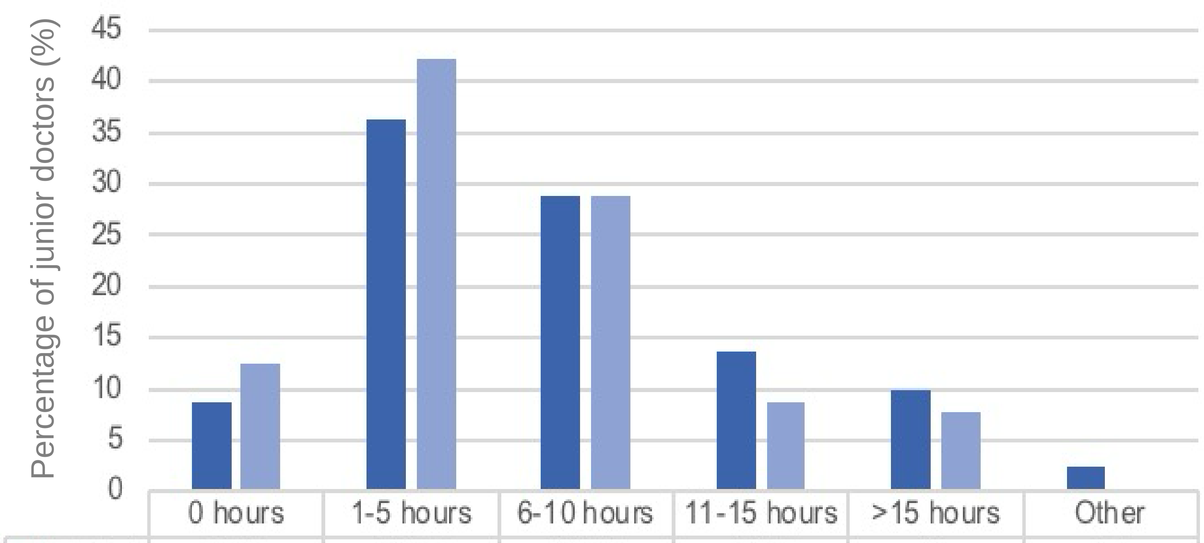
Junior doctors surveyed in February 2023 with 80 respondents (1st cycle/PEER-1) → Barriers to Exception Reporting identified → Instructional posters, video, reminder emails and induction materials created → Junior doctors re-surveyed in November 2023 with 104 respondents (2nd cycle/PEER-2)

Results

Table 1: Summary of Results

	PEER-1	PEER-2
Awareness of how to Exception Report	56.25%	61.54%
Clearly explained in induction	22.5%	29.81%
Unsure if it is appropriate to Exception Report	38.75%	35.58%
'Never' Exception Report	51.25%	42.31%
'Very easy' to Exception Report	6.25%	13.46%
Discouraged by department	8.75%	3.85%
>5 hours overtime in a month	52.5%	45.19%

Figure 1: On average, how many additional hours of overtime do you work in a month?



	0 hours	1-5 hours	6-10 hours	11-15 hours	>15 hours	Other
PEER-1	8.75	36.25	28.75	13.75	10	2.5
PEER-2	12.5	42.31	28.85	8.65	7.69	0

Figure 2: Reasons for not Exception Reporting

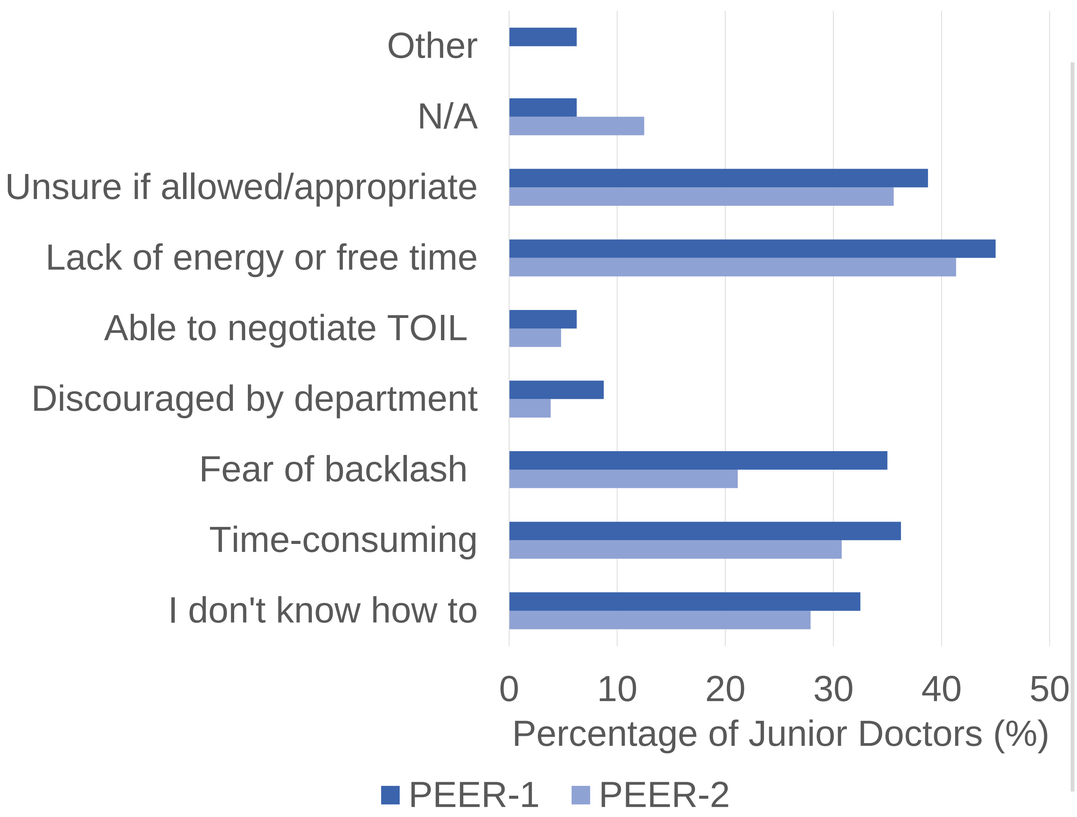
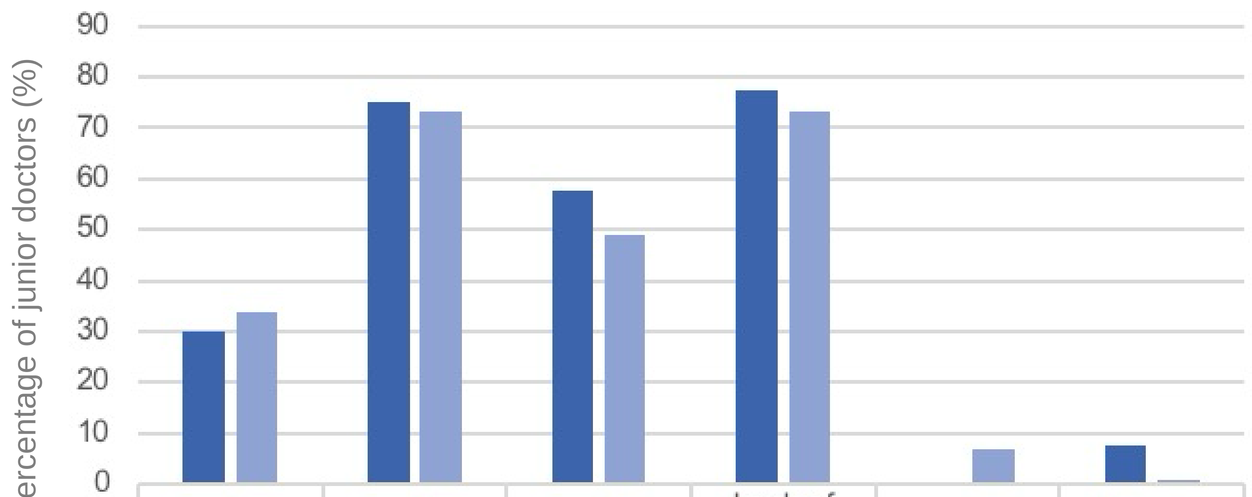


Figure 3: How does working beyond your rostered affect you/ patient care? (multiple selections)



	Suboptimal patient care	Burnout/ fatigue	Reduced morale	Lack of work/life balance	N/A	Other
PEER-1	30	75	57.5	77.5	0	7.5
PEER-2	33.65	73.08	49.04	73.08	6.73	0.96

Conclusion

The PEER quality improvement project demonstrated an improvement in the understanding and utilisation of Exception Reporting among junior doctors at NWAFT. However, multiple barriers to Exception Reporting persist, necessitating further interventions in future PDSA cycles. To promote sustainability of our changes, we aim to appoint junior doctor and consultant Exception Reporting champion roles, who can continue to promote and encourage Exception Reporting practices. This quality improvement project is pivotal to promote safe working practices in junior doctors, prevent burnout and ensure optimal patient care.

References: 1. Terms and Conditions of Service for NHS Doctors and Dentists in Training (England) 2016 Version 3 21 April 2017