



Association of British Neurologists

ABN Trainees Committee

17th September 2015

Dear Andrew and Kitty

I am writing on behalf of the Association of British Neurologists Trainees (ABNT) committee, which represents the views of UK neurology trainees. After seeking the views of our trainee members, we wish to let you know that the ABNT committee finds the recent DDRB recommendations unfair and divisive and that it supports the BMA JDC in rejecting the recommendations.

The ABNT's primary concerns are as follows:

1. **Thinning of services:** We do not agree that evenings and Saturdays should be designated "normal" working hours. Spreading out services in this way will lead to thinning of services during the current working week and will be to the overall detriment of patient care.
2. **Gender discrimination:** The proposed changes to pay structure for juniors would discriminate against those who step out of the NHS (e.g. for research, sick leave or maternity leave), or change careers within the NHS. This will discriminate against those taking maternity leave, further widening the gender gap in pay.
3. **Erosion of academic and other specialist skills:** The proposed changes to pay structure for juniors would also discourage trainees from undertaking time out-of-programme for research or other training, during which period trainees acquire academic and other specialist skills that make significant contributions to patient care but cannot typically be obtained during standard clinical training.
4. **Lack of safeguards:** We are concerned about the lack of explicit safeguards to prevent excessive working hours for juniors if banding were to be abolished. Excessive working hours are detrimental to safe decision-making and thus to safe patient care.

These changes are particularly relevant to UK neurology trainees because around two-thirds undertake a period of out-of-programme research during their training, and just over half of UK neurology trainees are female (source: 2015 ABNT Trainee Survey).

In summary, the ABNT committee believes the DDRB's recommendations, if implemented, would be detrimental to both patient care and the wellbeing of medical staff.

Yours sincerely,

Alexander Foulkes
Chair of the ABNT Committee, on behalf of UK neurology trainees

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