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EXPLORING PERCEPTIONS OF REDEPLOYMENT AND PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT FOR NHS DOCTORS AT THE FIRST PEAK OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN LONDON

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Background

The first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in unprecedented redeployment of medical staff in NHS Trusts.

Aims

We explored perceptions around redeployment processes and subsequent effects on medical staff.

Methods

An electronic survey administered via the Postgraduate Medical Education Centre at a London teaching hospital was sent to 1700 doctors, culminating in 502 responses (response rate 30%); 49% of respondents were consultants. Quantitative data exploration involved correlation analyses whilst qualitative data exploration was by thematic analysis.

Results

Whilst 168/502 (34%) participants were redeployed only 30/502 (6% of the sample, or 17% of those redeployed) had risk assessments in advance. Minority ethnic origin did not increase the chances of receiving one, however seniority made it more likely. Underlying physical health conditions were identified in 20% of the sample and mental health conditions in 7% but a physical condition was more likely to correlate to undertaking risk assessment (9/33 vs 1/11).

Participants perceived lack of communication, limited information and flexibility around redeployment as well as limited availability of personal protective equipment or other equipment to support remote working. There was evidence of heightened anxiety and uncertainty with the redeployment process.

Conclusions

Utilisation of health data and a clear redeployment policy is key to responding successfully to future major incidents. Managerial training in risk assessment is paramount. Mental and physical conditions should be treated with parity as well as assessing other risk factors.

Medical Education Centres could play an important role in signposting to Occupational Health and Wellbeing support.

References

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