



Participant Information Leaflet

Wellbeing 2: A National Study of Wellbeing of Hospital Doctors in Ireland

Principal investigator's name:

Prof Blánaid Hayes

Co-investigator's name:

Dr Mary-Teresa O'Neill (Aspire Fellow)

You are invited to take part in Wellbeing 2: A National Study of Wellbeing of Hospital Doctors in Ireland. It's over a decade since the first study explored the personal and workplace wellbeing of hospital doctors and a follow-up study is long overdue. This is a national, cross-sectional questionnaire study which was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the RCPI in September 2024. Participation is voluntary and by responding to the questionnaire electronically, you are consenting to participate.

Why is this study being done?

This study is a 10-year follow up to the first [National Wellbeing Study](#) of hospital doctors carried out in 2014. It will explore the personal and workplace wellbeing of consultants and NCHDs over 11 hospital specialties to build on information obtained more than a decade ago. While there is more attention being paid now to the health and wellbeing of doctors, they continue to experience difficulties in a work environment which is often regarded as unsupportive.

There have been some positive developments over the past decade including contractual changes for consultants and increased numbers of all grades but there are many doctors who are not on training schemes, and we are keen to hear from them also. We want to know how things are now for hospital doctors, as we have no recent comprehensive national data in this area. This national survey will fill this information gap and will allow us to compare results to the original study particularly if we can replicate the enthusiastic response rate (55%) achieved.

We need your help to answer the following:

1. What is the current level of career satisfaction among doctors working in Irish hospitals?
2. What is the level of personal psychological wellbeing (e.g. anxiety, depression, stress, suicidality symptoms, self-stigma) in hospital doctors in Ireland?
3. What is the level of workplace wellbeing (e.g. work stress, burnout) in this population?
4. Lifestyle health behaviours (e.g. smoking, alcohol, substance misuse, exercise, social media use) of hospital doctors.

5. What are the most common coping strategies used by doctors?
6. We've added some new questions on suicidality symptoms, mental illness, workplace incivility and resilience.

Who is organising this study?

Blánaid conducted the original study and is assisted this time by Mary Teresa. An expert advisory group with representatives from psychiatry, psychology, occupational medicine, general practice and health and wellbeing contributed to the design of the questionnaire.

The study is sponsored by RCPI and there is ongoing stakeholder engagement with the postgraduate medical training bodies (PGMTBs), namely the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland, the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, the College of Anaesthesiologists of Ireland, the Irish College of Psychiatry, the Irish Committee for Emergency Medical Training, the Faculty of Radiologists and Radiation Oncologists, the Irish College of General Practitioners and the Irish College of Ophthalmologists.

Why am I being asked to take part?

You are being asked to take part in this study because you are working in an Irish public hospital in one of the following roles: a consultant, an NCHD on a training scheme, an NCHD not on a training programme, a GP trainee on a hospital rotation.

How will the study be carried out?

The PGMTBs are facilitating dissemination of the questionnaire by email to doctors registered with them. All completed questionnaires will enter a secure system once the respondent has hit the 'SUBMIT' button.

What will happen to me if I agree to take part?

If you agree to take part, you will need to set aside 15 mins to complete the questionnaire which you will submit using your mobile phone or other device.

Once you've submitted the questionnaire you will be routed through a separate connection where you can choose to provide your contact email address to be entered into a draw. This is completely separate from your questionnaire response and cannot be linked to it retrospectively by the researchers. You may choose not to disclose your email; in which case you will not be included in the prize draw. Your completed questionnaire will however be processed.

What are the benefits?

Many doctors engage in research on patients/other subjects but have little opportunity to be the subject of research themselves. This is an important Irish study which will be of interest to doctors themselves and which will build on the groundwork laid down by the last survey in relation to the wellbeing of doctors. The results will be shared with the PGMTBs and other relevant stakeholders.

What are the risks?

The demand on time is the only risk envisaged for most of those taking part. We suggest you put aside the designated time within a week of receipt of the questionnaire so that it doesn't get overlooked. Two reminder emails will be sent, and the survey will close six weeks after the initial contact.

Some respondents may experience disquiet upon reading the questionnaire, as the issues explored are sensitive. If you are concerned about your mental health, please contact a close friend or family member for support. You may also consider contacting these organisations for mental health support:

The **Employee Assistance Programme** (or counselling service) in the hospital where you work.

Practitioner Health:

Confidential help for doctors, dentists and pharmacists.

Phone: 085 7601274

Email: confidential@practitionerhealth.ie

Visit www.practitionerhealth.ie for more information

Samaritans:

The Samaritans telephone service is available 24 hours a day for confidential, non-judgemental support.

Freephone: 116 123

Email jo@samaritans.ie

Visit www.samaritans.ie for more information

Will it cost me anything to take part, or will I be rewarded in any way?

Taking part will not incur any costs. If you provide your email address, we will include you in a draw for one of 3 X €500 SWIRL® pre-paid debit cards as a small token of appreciation. You will also be awarded one CPD credit which has been approved by the PGMTBs.

Is the study confidential?

As this study seeks answers to very sensitive questions **responses will be 100% anonymous**. The following measures will be put in place to ensure confidentiality of information:

- No names or personally identifiable information will be collected. Demographic information about age, gender, speciality, nationality and ethnicity will be sought. However, no information will be collected which could link respondents to their individual questionnaire.
- At no stage shall either the researchers or the independent administrator be able to identify questionnaires of individual respondents. Therefore, the researchers will be unable to return surveys to individual respondents even if requested.
- Study data will be published in aggregate form. No individual can or will be identified.
- All data will be collected and maintained in accordance with legislative requirements (Data Protection Act 2018 (Section 36(2)) (Health Research) (Amendment) Regulations 2021).

What will happen to the results?

- A detailed report will be prepared in 2026 and distributed to relevant stakeholders with media engagement. Thereafter the results will be disseminated through peer-reviewed publications and academic presentations.

If you have any further questions about this study, please contact: marytoneill@rcpi.ie Thank you for reading this leaflet. We hope that you will participate!