

HOSPITAL HEALTH CHECK 2021



The 2021 Hospital Health Check quantifies issues experienced by Victorian trainees working in the public hospital system.

The survey helps AMA Victoria identify workplace and cultural issues within public hospitals across the state.

It also provides a way for AMA Victoria to monitor progress and improvements made by health services.

AMA Victoria sends report cards to each health service and requests written responses as to actions they are taking to make improvements.

These responses are shared with members.



Introduction

THE SURVEY'S PURPOSE

The Hospital Health Check 2021 quantifies issues experienced by Victorian trainees within the public hospital system and identifies specific areas that need to be addressed.

Health services throughout the state remain in breach of the current Enterprise Agreement for Doctors in Training, which exists to ensure the safety of Victorian patients and trainees. AMA Victoria will continue to work with these health services and advocate for safety.

ENGAGEMENT

Overall response numbers in our Hospital Health Check 2021 were less than the year before, with reduced engagement also reflected in equivalent junior doctor surveys run by other state branches of the AMA during the COVID pandemic. However, we are pleased to announce that this year we are able to report on more health services than in previous years, thanks to more health services reaching the minimum response rate required for publication. We are particularly grateful to the contributions of AMA representatives and JMO Societies, as well as those health services who encouraged their doctors in training to take part.

RESULTS SUMMARY

Despite the unprecedented circumstances triggered by the COVID/19 pandemic, the results from this year's survey show a continuation of the chronic underlying issues reported in previous years. Unpaid work and fatigue due to working conditions continue to be major issues for Victorian doctors in training. AMA Victoria is seeking urgent action from health services and the Victorian Government to rectify these issues.

Urgent solutions needed:

AMA Victoria is calling on Victorian health services to ensure adequate staffing and rostering, and to build in regular consultation with their frontline doctors in training, to ensure the safety of their patients and staff. Essential to the required measures will be acknowledging and removing practices which obstruct the accurate documentation and claiming of unrostered overtime, as well as taking into account leave and training requirements.

1	Workplace Morale	Victorian Average 2019	Victorian Average 2020
	Very good	10%	11%
	Good	29%	32%
	Satisfactory	29%	26%
	Poor	22%	20%
	Very poor	11%	11%

2	How often trainees feel worn out because of their work	Victorian Average 2019	Victorian Average 2020
	Never	1%	2%
	Rarely	10%	10%
	Sometimes	38%	37%
	Often	32%	33%
	Very often	19%	18%

3	How often trainees were paid for the unrostered overtime they worked	Victorian Average 2019	Victorian Average 2020
	Never	44%	47%
	About 25% of the time	22%	18%
	About 50% of the time	14%	10%
	About 75% of the time	10%	11%
	Always	10%	15%

4 Reasons why trainees were not paid all of the unrostered overtime they worked		
	Victorian Average 2019	Victorian Average 2020
Did not know claiming this was possible	4%	3%
Unclear or confusing claiming process	17%	17%
Highly obstructive or difficult claiming process	44%	39%
Did not believe the amount of overtime worked was worth claiming	44%	42%
Advised that unrostered overtime is only paid for stipulated reasons	41%	35%
Advised not to claim by my Registrar	7%	7%
Advised not to claim by my Consultant or Head of Unit	16%	12%
Advised not to claim by peers at the same level of training	31%	23%
Advised not to claim by hospital administration or Medical Workforce Unit	10%	10%
Claim submitted but rejected by Medical Workforce Unit	6%	7%
Claim submitted but rejected by Consultant or Head of Unit	4%	4%
Hospital / workplace cultural expectations	46%	38%
Not applicable: no unrostered overtime was performed	2%	4%
Not applicable: all unrostered overtime worked was paid	8%	10%

5 Frequency of needing to work through their 30 minute meal break on an average week		
	Victorian Average 2019	Victorian Average 2020
Never	2%	3%
Rarely	10%	12%
Sometimes	20%	22%
Often	26%	27%
Always	42%	36%

6 Trainees whose work hours prevent important things for their physical health		
	Victorian Average 2019	Victorian Average 2020
Never	3%	4%
Rarely	10%	14%
Sometimes	29%	35%
Often	33%	28%
Always	26%	19%

7 Trainees whose work hours prevent important things for their mental wellbeing		
	Victorian Average 2019	Victorian Average 2020
Never	3%	5%
Rarely	12%	18%
Sometimes	30%	35%
Often	31%	23%
Very often	24%	18%

8 Trainees who made a clinical error in 2020 due to fatigue		
	Victorian Average 2019	Victorian Average 2020
Yes	56%	47%
No	44%	53%

9 Trainees who made a clinical error in 2020 due to excessive workload or understaffing		
	Victorian Average 2019	Victorian Average 2020
Yes	60%	50%
No	40%	50%

10 Trainees who raised serious concerns about workload with supervisors or Medical Workforce Unit but were brushed off or ignored		
	Victorian Average 2019	Victorian Average 2020
Yes	34%	34%
No	66%	66%

11 Trainees rating of employer support for their mental health and wellbeing		
	Victorian Average 2019	Victorian Average 2020
Very good	7%	11%
Good	22%	23%
Satisfactory	32%	33%
Poor	24%	20%
Very poor	15%	13%

12 Trainees who attend work despite being unwell enough to warrant staying home		
	Victorian Average 2019	Victorian Average 2020
Never	5%	22%
Rarely	12%	28%
Sometimes	36%	31%
Often	37%	15%
Always	11%	3%

13 Barriers faced by trainees when needing to use sick leave		
	Victorian Average 2019	Victorian Average 2020
Health service does not provide adequate coverage for absence	67%	60%
Lack of support from supervisors or senior medical staff	12%	12%
Lack of adequate after-hours support from the Medical Workforce Unit	19%	20%
There is a culture of not calling in sick	40%	33%
Do not want to burden colleagues with extra work	89%	84%
Work would pile up if take sick leave	41%	38%

14 Intern teaching *		
	Victorian Average 2019	Victorian Average 2020
Receive entitlement fully	43%	41%
Teaching available but not free from clinical duties	57%	58%
No formal intern teaching offered	0%	1%

15 Registrar training time *		
	Victorian Average 2019	Victorian Average 2020
Receive entitlement fully	48%	50%
Training time available but not free from clinical duties	33%	36%
No registrar training time offered	19%	13%

16 Barriers to attending intern teaching or registrar training time *		
	Victorian Average 2019	Victorian Average 2020
Lack of advertisement	4%	3%
Not appropriately rostered	40%	43%
Not offered consistently	17%	17%
Lack of coverage by registrars or consultants to allow attendance	51%	57%
Excess workload	61%	64%
No barriers	12%	10%
Other	14%	13%

17 Intern teaching or registrar training time appears correctly on roster *		
	Victorian Average 2019	Victorian Average 2020
Yes	45%	47%
No	55%	53%

18 Reported ongoing breaches to the 2018-21 Doctors in Training Enterprise Agreement		
	Victorian Average 2019	Victorian Average 2020
Working shifts with less than a 10-hour break between them (including telephone calls, being recalled into the hospital, being on-call for sick leave etc.)	41%	35%
Working shifts greater than 16 hours	13%	8%
Less than 48 hours off duty when moving from night shifts to any other shift arrangement	23%	17%
Less than a whole calendar day clear from duty (including on-call and overtime) between your final shift at Hospital 1 and your first shift at Hospital 2	13%	11%
None of these options have occurred	43%	51%

19 Trainees who have experienced discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, bullying or victimisation at work		
	Victorian Average 2019	Victorian Average 2020
Yes	39%	31%
No	61%	69%

20 Trainees who have been subjected to, witnessed or reported unacceptable behaviours		
	Victorian Average 2019	Victorian Average 2020
Discrimination	13%	12%
Sexual harassment	6%	6%
Bullying	33%	24%
Victimisation	10%	11%
Racial or religious vilification	59%	5%

21 Barriers preventing trainees from reporting unacceptable behaviours		
	Victorian Average 2019	Victorian Average 2020
Fear of negative career consequences	59%	54%
Unsure of reporting process	33%	32%
Fear of disrupting team dynamic	40%	34%
Reporting is not in the "ethos" of the unit/hospital	17%	14%
Don't have time to make an appointment	16%	13%
Process is too difficult	23%	22%
Criticism from colleagues	16%	14%
I would be judged by my colleagues as not being resilient enough	23%	22%
Lack of capacity for anonymous reporting	0%	31%
Lack of senior colleague to report to	14%	25%
Intimidation from colleagues/management	16%	14%
I don't think that reporting the behaviour will change anything	n/a	37%
No barriers to reporting	21%	26%

22 Trainees asked inappropriate questions during job interviews or pre-interviews		
	Victorian Average 2019	Victorian Average 2020
Sexual orientation	1%	0%
Family Plans and/or Marriage/Partnerships	12%	10%
Religion	1%	0%
Race	n/a	1%
Political affiliation	n/a	0%
Location of residence	11%	8%
Health and Mental Health (not including questions regarding pre-existing injuries/medical conditions/disability that would affect performance of inherent requirements of the job)	3%	3%
No inappropriate questions asked	79%	85%

23 Trainees who sought flexible working arrangements		
	Victorian Average 2019	Victorian Average 2020
Did not seek	88%	92%
Sought and was successful	7%	5%
Sought and applied but was unsuccessful	1%	2%
Sought but was unable to apply	3%	2%

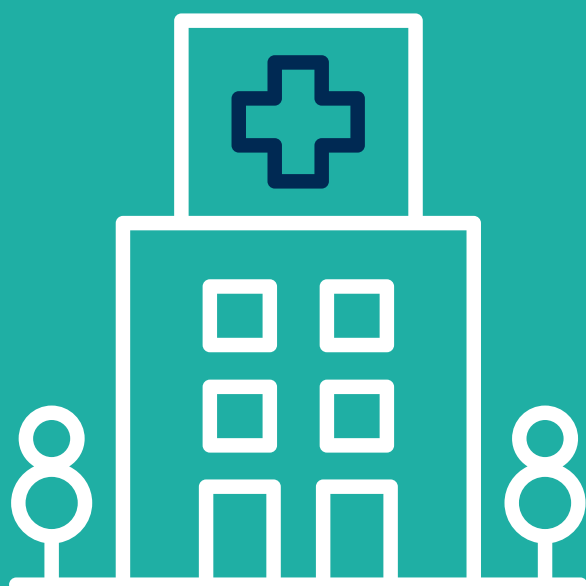
24 Trainees who in the preceding 6 months had considered resigning due to workload and poor working conditions		
	Victorian Average 2019	Victorian Average 2020
Never	41%	49%
Rarely	24%	19%
Sometimes	16%	16%
Often	8%	8%
Very often	10%	8%

25 Trainees who would recommend their hospital to peers		
	Victorian Average 2019	Victorian Average 2020
Strongly agree	17%	22%
Agree	37%	35%
Neutral	26%	23%
Disagree	11%	11%
Strongly disagree	9%	10%

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Disclaimer

The AMA Victoria Hospital Health Check was completed on a voluntary basis by Victorian doctors in training covered by the Doctor in Training Enterprise Agreement 2018-2021.

The purpose of this document is to assist graduating medical students as well as current interns and residents when deciding on which health services to apply for in the future.

This information is provided in good faith and should only be used as a guide. It is intended to be general in nature and is made available on the understanding that the AMA Victoria does not make any comment or assertion that the information provided by participants is correct, or reflects the experiences of doctors who did not participate in the survey.

Before relying on the information contained in the survey results provided, users should carefully evaluate its accuracy, currency, completeness and relevance for their purposes, personal objectives and career goals, and should make their own enquiries, including consulting with the relevant health service and staff.

Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the collation of the information in this survey, AMA Victoria cannot be held responsible for the information provided by participants in the survey and cannot be responsible for any loss or damage arising from any person or organisation as a result of the publication of this survey of information. AMA Victoria does not take any responsibility for the outcomes published in the survey.

Comparison of results among health services must be made with caution, as the survey did not involve a probabilistic sampling frame, but instead was open to the entire Victorian doctor in training population. Further, as doctors in training were not randomly allocated to health services, differences in attitudes and expectations of respondents cannot be adequately controlled. This introduces biases into the results which cannot be accounted for.

Thus, all differences among health services should be interpreted as specific only to the survey respondents and must not be interpreted as representative of the experiences of all junior doctors in Victoria.

***Stage of Training**

Survey Respondents	Number	Percentage
Intern	332	32.52
HMO	299	29.29
Unaccredited/ Non-Training Registrar	80	7.84
Accredited Registrar	225	22.04
Advanced Trainee/Fellow (final year of training)	74	7.25
Career Medical Officer	1	0.10
Prefer to not disclose	10	0.98
Total	1,021	100